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10. Tawhid In 'Ibadah And Worship (Or Pretext Of Wahhabis)

Monotheism (worship of the one God) is the basis of the invitation of the Prophets in all ages. This means that all the human-beings must worship the one God and refrain from worshipping creatures.

Monotheism and shattering the chains of 'dualism' and 'polytheism' are the most fundamental heavenly commands and have been the epigraph of the program of all the divine Prophets.

Every Prophet had been appointed with one main aim and that is establishing monotheism and fighting against absolute polytheism and especially polytheism in worship.

The Holy Qur'an refers to this reality and says:

And certainly We raised an apostle in every nation [to preach:] 'Worship Allah, and shun fake deities. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Nahl, 16:36)

And we did not send before you any apostle but we revealed to him that there is no god but Me, therefore serve Me. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Anbiya, 21:25)

The Holy Qur'an introduces monotheism as a common base among all the heavenly precepts:

Say: O followers of the Book! come to an equitable proposition between us and you that we shall not serve any but Allah and (that) we shall not associate aught with Him. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Aale Imran, 3:64)

Tawhid in worship is a decisive and firm foundation which has never been opposed by any of the Muslims and all the sects hold a common view about it. Although the group of Mu'tazilites are having a different view in توحید صفات (Tawhid in actions) and the group of 'Asharites differ in توحید افعالی (Tawhid in attributes), still all the Islamic sects have had one opinion in this respect and no Muslim can deny this principle. And if there is any differences, they are all related to مصادیق (its applicability); that is to say some of the Muslims imagine some of the actions to be 'ibadah (worship) whereas others consider that to be honor and respect. Whatever dispute which exists is in سفری (minor type) i.e. whether so and so act is 'ibadah or not and not in کبری (of major type) i.e. 'ibadah other than Allah amounts to polytheism and is forbidden. It is here that we should properly clarify the meaning of 'ibadah from the viewpoint of dialect and the Qur'an and then the relevant duties and مصادیق (applicability) of the matters under discussion will automatically become clear.

Tawhid in 'ibadah is not something which some particular group can attribute it to themselves. Instead, all the monotheists, especially the Muslims are of one view in this regard. What is of concern is the talk and discussion of a series of actions which some manifest them as 'ibadah while others do not consider them to have any relation to 'ibadah. Thus we have to talk and discuss about this matter in this section. We have to define 'ibadah in logical terms and clarify its limits and boundaries and hand over a criterion to the other person so that under the light of this he can distinguish the true 'ibadah from the false one. 1

Limits Of 'Ibadah And Its Comprehensive Meaning

'Ibadah in Arabic is equivalent to 'worship' in English. Just as the word 'worship' is having a clear and obvious meaning for us, in the same manner the word of 'ibadah is having a clear meaning even though we may not be able to give it a logical definition, and interpretation.

Undoubtedly, the meaning of 'land' and 'sky' is very clear and obvious for all of us but still, most of us are unable to define and explain them perfectly. However this matter cannot prevent us from understanding the clear and obvious meaning of these two words if ever we hear them.

'Ibadah and worship too are similar to the words 'land' and 'sky' Everyone is aware of its actual meaning even though we may not be able to define it logically as the actual dispensations of each of the words of 'ibadah and ta'zim or worship and honor is clear for us and differentiating the instance of each from the other is simple and easy.

A lover who kisses the door and walls of the house of beloved one or keeps dress or puts it over chest or after death, kisses the grave of beloved will never be taken as a worshipper in the eyes of anybody. The action of those who hasten for visiting the mummified bodies of great world leaders who are a

center of attraction for a group of people or visit their traces, houses and haven or for honoring them go into a few seconds of silence and hold ceremonies, will not be reckoned as '*ibadah* (worship) even though their humility and manifestation of love is in the rank of humility of monotheists in front of God. In this discussion, only the awakened consciences can be the judges in order to differentiate between *ta'zim* (respect) and '*ibadah* (worship).

Now if we wish to explain 'ibadah in the logical sense and wish to test and analyze it, we can define it in three ways and all the three explanation can pursue the same objective. However, before that we shall mention two defective introductions upon which the Wahhabis rely.

Two Defective Presentations Of 'Ibadah

A. 'Ibadah: Humility (خضوع and Submissiveness (تذلل)

In dictionaries, the word of *'ibadah* has been interpreted as humility or humbleness (خضوع) and manifestation of meekness or submissiveness (اظهار تذلل). Such an interpretation cannot give a precise, correct and perfect meaning of the word of *'ibadah* because:

- 1. If 'ibadah is synonymous to either humility (غضوع) and meekness, (تذلل) then we cannot issue an identity card of tawhid for anybody in this world and cannot call anyone as a monotheist because man, by nature, is humble and meek in front of the spiritual and material perfections of those who are above him and better than him, like a student in front of his teacher, a child in front of his father and mother, a lover in front of his beloved one and so on.
- 2. The Holy Qur'an commands the children to be low and humble before the parents. It says:

And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra', 17:24)2

If an abject humility is the sign of '*lbadah*' of that person, then all the obedient children have to be called as polytheists and all the disobedient ones as monotheists.

B. 'Ibadah: Unlimited Humility

When some of the commentators became aware of the deficiency of interpretation of the compilers of dictionaries, they strived to amend it and interpreted it in another manner. They said: *'ibadah* is that unlimited humility in sensing, perfection and greatness.'

Such an interpretation is no less than the first interpretation because God orders the angels to prostrate before Adam (a). As Qur'an says:

And when We said to the angels: Make prostration to Adam they did prostrate except Iblis. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:34)

Prostration in front of a creature is evidence of meekness and the manifestation of unlimited humility.

If such an act is the sign of 'ibadah, then all the obedient angels are to be declared as polytheists, and the disobedient Satan as a monotheist.

The sons of Ya'qub (a) and even he himself along with his wife prostrated before the magnificence of Yusuf as the holy Qur'an says:

And they fell down in prostration before him, and he said: O my father! this is the significance of my vision of old, my Lord has indeed made it to be true. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Yusuf, 12:100)

The Holy Qur'an narrates the dream of Yusuf (a) in his childhood and says:

Surely I saw eleven stars, and the sun and the moon: I saw them prostrating themselves before me. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Yusuf, 12:4)

Following the leader of the monotheists, the Holy Prophet (S) – all the Muslims honor *Hajar Al–Aswad* (black stone) and rub their hands over it. That is to say, they act in the same way as idol–worshippers do to their idols with the difference that our action is purely *tawhid* and their action purely heresy.

By paying attention to this point, one should not search the reality of *'ibadah* only in the external form of action and in the absolute humilities and meekness even though humility and meekness are amongst the actual elements and essentials of *'ibadah*. However, the elements and essentials are not confined to that; rather humility and meekness should also be linked with some special belief and in fact if humility whether unlimited or to a lesser degree originates from a special belief, it will be counted as *'ibadah*. As a matter of fact, it is belief that gives the color of *'ibadah* to one's action and without it, the action cannot be regarded as *'ibadah*.

Now, what is this second element? This is what we are going to discuss in this section, i.e. the logical explanation of 'ibadah.

First Definition Of 'Ibadah

'Ibadah is that practical, literal or verbal humility which originates from belief in the divinity of source entity.

Now we should see what is meant by 'Divinity' and the crucial point of our discussion lies in understanding the meaning of 'Divinity' to Divinity gives the meaning of Godliness and 'Divinity' to Divinity gives the meaning of Godliness and 'Divinity' the meaning of God. If incidentally, the word of 'Divinity' (God) has been interpreted as 'deity', it necessitates explanation and not that deity is the actual meaning of 'Divinity'. Rather, in view of the fact that the genuine 'Divinity' the meaning of the world, it is supposed that 'Divinity' and not its primary meaning.

A clearer evidence that the word of did denotes the meaning of God and not deity is the very pure creed (of faith) i.e. the word of did is interpreted as 'deity' then this creed will be a false one because it is clear and obvious that with the exception of 'Allah', there are thousands of other deities too.

Therefore, for relieving themselves from the difficulty, some people have commended the word of بالحق so that in this way they remove the falsehood and thus the meaning of the sentence becomes الله لا معبود (no deity with the truth except Allah). However appreciating such a sentence is nothing but a formality.

A clear proof of this definition is a verse which has come in this regard. Examining this verse will clarify the fact that 'ibadah is that kind of speech and action which originates from the belief in divinity3 and till such a belief does not exist in a person his humility and bowing down or honor and respect will not be counted as 'ibadah. When Qur'an gives command to perform 'ibadah of Allah, it immediately convinces that except for Him there is no god. As Qur'an says:

O (my) people, worship Allah; there is no god for you except Him. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf, 7:59)

The main theme of this verse has come in nine or more instances and our dear readers can refer to *Surah A'raaf*, no. 7, verses 65, 73, 58, *Surah Hud*, no. 11, verses 5, 61 and 84 *Surah Al–Anbiya*, no. 21, verse 25, *Surah Al–Mu'minun*, no. 23, verses 23 and 32, and *Surah Taha*, no. 20, verse 14.

Such interpretations indicate that 'ibadah is that humility and meekness which originates from belief in divinity and if such a belief does not exist, then it cannot be regarded as 'ibadah.

This verse and its contents is not the only verse which bears testimony to this matter. Rather other verses too bear testimony to this fact such as:

Surely they used to behave proudly when it was said to them: There is no god but Allah. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Saffat, 37:35)

That is to say, they do not pay attention to this talk because they believe in the divinity of other creatures.

Or have they a god other than Allah? Glory be to Allah from what they set up (with Him). (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Tur, 52:43)4

In the above verse, the basis of polytheism has been shown to be belief in the divinity of someone other than Allah.

Those who set up another god with Allah; so they shall soon know. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Hijr, 15:96)

And they who do not call upon another god with Allah... (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Furgan, 25:68)

The proof that the call of the polytheists was along with the belief in divinity of their idols are the following verses:

And they have taken gods besides Allah that they should be to them a source of strength. (Holy

Qur'an, Surah Maryam, 19:81)

Do you really bear witness that there are other gods with Allah? (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am, 6:19)

And when Ibrahim said to his sire Azar: Do you take idols for gods? (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am, 6:74)

By referring to the verses that have come down about the polytheism of idol-worshippers, this reality becomes clear that the polytheism of idol-worshippers was the result of their belief in the divinity of their deities and they considered these deities which were man-made ones to be as various gods. They believed that some of the affairs of the great god had been entrusted to them and because of this, they used to worship them.

It was because of their belief in divinity of their idols that whenever they were invited to believe in the One God, they would deny this matter and if a partner was associated with Him they would readily believe just as the following verse confirms so:

That is because when Allah alone was called upon, you disbelieved, and when associates were given to Him, you believed, Judgement belongs to Allah, the High, the Great. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Ghafir, 40:12)

When (late) Ayatullah Al-Sheikh Muhammad Jawad Al-Balaghis comes to the point of analyzing and interpreting the reality of *'ibadah* in his valuable *tafsir* called *'Aala Al-Rahman* he explains it as such:

"Ibadah (worship) is that very action which arises from the humility of a person in front of the One whom he selects as God, so that he fulfils His superior right which He possesses due to His distinguished position (divinity)." 6

Al-Balaghi has described 'ibadah by his own conscience and perception and the afore-mentioned

verses clearly confirm and elucidate the correctness and firmness of this description.

The great teacher, Ayatullah Khomeini (ra) has written the same view in his valuable book and says: 'ibadah consists of glorifying someone as God either as a major God or a minor god.7

The most evident testimony to this view is the observation of the collective verses which speak against polytheism. All the polytheist sects would consider as (God, whether big or small and real or metaphorical) all such creatures whom they would pay homage and worship.

The key to this interpretation lies in this that by referring to the verses, we should clarify the point that means 'God' and not 'deity' and to be a God it is enough that a being (in the eyes of a worshipper) is the owner of some of the affairs and actions of the Creator God even though he himself may be a created one as was the view of the ignorant Arabs with respect to their idols.

Second Definition Of 'Ibadah

'lbadah is humility (خضوع) in front of the one whom we consider as رب (Lord).

We can change our perception of *'ibadah* and say: *'lbadah'* is a verbal and practical humility (خضوع) that arises from belief in the عبوديت (Lordship) of the source entity and the word of عبوديت (submission) is in contrast to ربوبيت (Lordship).

Whenever a person imagines himself to be a servant and slave and the opposite person to be his creator Lord and with this intention, he pays homage to his Lord (whether or not he is his actual Lord) such an action will be considered as 'ibadah'.

From the verses mentioned hereunder we can derive this conclusion that 'ibadah' is from the rank of ربوبيت (Lordship). Here are some of them:

And the Messiah said: O Children of Israel! Serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Maida, 5:72)

Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him, this is the right path. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Aale Imran, 3:51)

Such contents have come in other verses too. In some of the verses, *'lbadah'* is reckoned to be from the rank of خالفیت (creative power) as it says:

ذَالِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۚ لَا إِلَّهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ؟ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ

That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god but He, the Creator of all things, therefore serve Him. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am, 6:102)

What Is Meant By رب (Lord)?

In Arabic language, برب (Lord) is attributed to the One to whom the management and direction of all things is entrusted and their destiny rests in His authority. If in Arabic, the owner of a house; the nurse of a child and the farmer of a farm are called as بر (Lord), it is because the authority of their management is entrusted to them and their destiny lies in their hand. If we recognize God to be our Lord, it is because our entire destiny, right from existence, life, death, sustenance, legislation and forgiveness lies in His hands.

Now if someone imagines that one of the affairs related to our destiny lies in someone else's hand, for example, if God entrusts the affair of life, death, sustenance, legislation and forgiveness to some other person so that the person independently assumes the responsibility of all or one of these positions, we have taken him as Lord. If with this belief, we pay homage to him, we have worshipped him.

In other words, 'ibadah' and worship originates from the feeling of bondage and the reality of bondage is nothing other than taking oneself as slave and the higher authority as the Master of existence, life, death and sustenance or at least the Master and authority of particularly forgiveness, intercession, and enactor of laws and responsibilities. In such a case, he has imagined him to be his Lord and anyone who manifests such feelings either verbally or practically has undoubtedly worshipped him.

Third Definition Of 'Ibadah

Here we can interpret 'ibadah in a different manner and that is: "'Ibadah is humility (خضوع) in front of the one whom we think as God or the source of divine works".

There is no doubt that the affairs connected with the world of creation and existence such as, planning of the affairs, bringing to life the human-beings, causing the people to die, giving sustenance to the living creatures and forgiving the sins of the people, are all from God. If you refer to the verses 11 related to planning of the affairs, creation of things, reviving the dead and causing the alive ones to die and other such verses, you will realize that Qur'an recognizes, with emphatic emphasis, all such affairs to be the work of God and strictly prohibits its connection to anyone other than Him.

On the other hand, we know that the world of creation is a well-organized and systematic world and every action which takes place in this world does not occur without the numerous causes which all finally lead to God. On various occasions the holy Qur'an has itself specified the causes of these actions which are the agents of God but act according to the command of God.

For example, Qur'an mentions with special emphasis that the Giver of Life and Death is God. As it says:

And He it is Who gives life and causes death, and (in) His (control) is the alternation of the night and the day. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Mu'minun, 23:80)

But the same Qur'an in another verse introduces the Angels to be the Giver of death. It says:

Until when death comes to one of you, Our messengers cause him to die. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am, 6:61)

Therefore the way of drawing a conclusion is that we say: The agency and causality of these natural causes whether material or non-material, such as the Angels is by the permission and command of God and the independent executor is God Himself. In other words, these two doers are besides each other, one being an independent doer and the other being a dependent one and this is one of the sublime gnosis of Qur'an which by referring to the numerous verses one can understand the actions of God.

Now if a person reckons the actions of God to be cut off from Him and says that these affairs have been entrusted to splendid creatures like Angles and Prophets and with such a belief, he pays homage and becomes humble in front of them, then certainly his humility is "*Ibadah*" and his action will amount to polytheism.

In other words, if he believes that God has bestowed the accomplishment of these affairs to them and that they independently fulfil all of them, then in such a case, he has likened them to God. Such a belief is undoubtedly polytheism and any kind of humility or request towards them will be 'ibadah.

As the Qur'an says:

And there are some among men who take for themselves objects of worship besides Allah, whom they love as they love Allah. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Bagarah, 2:165)

No creature can be, to our imagination, the example and like of Allah except if he is independent or has absolute authority in fulfilling one or more affairs. However, if he works by the permission and command of God then not only will he not be likened to Him, but also he will be an obedient creature who performs

his duty by His command.

Incidentally, the polytheists during the time of the Holy Prophet (S) were of the belief that the gods which they were worshipping had independent powers in fulfilling the affairs.

The lowest kind of belief in the form of polytheism during the period of ignorance was that a group of people were of the belief that the duty of legislation has been entrusted to the monks 12 and 'intercession' and 'forgiveness' which are specifically the right of Allah have been given to their idols and deities and that they are independent in these actions. Thus the verses which are related to intercession lay great emphasis that nobody can perform intercession without the permission of Allah. 13

If they were of the belief that their deities could do intercession by the permission of God, then it was needless to emphasize the matter of negation of intercession without the permission of God. Some of the sages of Greece had imagined a god for everything in this world and thought that the management of these things (which is the action of God) had been entrusted to them. Those ignorant Arabs who used to worship the angels and the fixed and the moving stars were of the opinion that the management of the world of creation had been bestowed upon them i.e. the angels and stars and they were the Masters in managing this world and that God had been completely dethroned from the position of management. 14

Therefore any kind of humility and bowing down which is accompanied by such a belief will amount to 'ibadah.

Some other group of ignorant Arabs did not consider the wooden and metallic idols to be their Creator and / or the manager of the affairs of this world but regarded them to be the Masters of intercession. They would say:

They are our intercessors towards Allah. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Yunus, 10:18)

Based on this false belief that they are the Masters of intercession, they worshipped them and thought that their worship was the source of gaining proximity to God. As they say:

We do not worship them except that they may make us nearly to Allah. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Zumar, 39:3)

In short, any action which originates from such perception that shows some kind of devotion will be taken as *'ibadah*. As against this, any action which does not originate from such a belief and any person

devoid of such belief exhibits his humility before someone and honors him then it will not be 'ibadah' and polytheism even though the action may be forbidden.

For example, the prostration of a lover before his beloved one or of a slave before his master or of a wife before her husband etc., are not 'ibadah' even though it is forbidden in the religion of Islam. This is because no one can prostrate (even if it does not amount to such 'ibadah') before anyone without the permission of Allah.

Conclusion Of Our Discussion

Up to this point, we were able to acquaint you clearly with the reality of *'ibadah*. Now it is necessary to derive a conclusion from the foregoing discussion. If someone becomes humble and shows humility in front of someone else without considering them as عن (God) or رب (lord) or the source of divine acts but respects them because of the fact that they are:

They are honored servants, they do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act," then surely, such an act shows nothing but honor respect, humility and humbleness. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Anbiya, 21:26–27)

God has introduced a group of His servants with such qualities that will attract the interest of every person towards honoring and respecting them. As the holy Qur'an says:

Surely Allah chose Adam and Nuh and the descendants of Ibrahim and the descendants of 'Imran above the nations. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Aale Imran, 3:33)

Almighty Allah (by specification of Qur'an) has appointed Ibrahim to the position of *Imamat* and leadership:

..... He said, Surely I will make you an Imam of men.... (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:124)

Almighty Allah has described Hazrat Nuh (a), Ibrahim (a), Dawud (a), Sulayman (a), Musa (a), 'Isa (a) and Muhammad (S) in the Holy Qur'an with such sublime qualities that each of these qualities is the source of attraction for the hearts to such extent that the love of some of them has been made

If the people respect and honor these servants in their life-time and even after their death from this viewpoint that they are the honorable servants of Allah and without recognizing them as God or imagining them to be the source of divine affairs, then such respect will never be considered as *libadah* and no one can call them as polytheists.

As you are all well-informed, following the Holy Prophet's custom, we respect and sanctify *Hajar Al-Aswad* which is no more than a black stone; we circumambulate around the House of God which is no more than stone and mud and strive between the two mountains named Safa and Marwa. That is to say, we perform the same actions which the idol-worshippers used to perform with regards to their idols. Under these circumstances, no one till now has thought that by these actions we are worshipping the stones and mud because we never imagine the least benefit or harm from them.

However, if we perform these actions with this belief that these stones and mountains are God and are the source of divine works, then in such a case, we will be equal to the idol-worshippers. Therefore, kissing the hands of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imams; master or teacher; parents or kissing Qur'an, religious books, shrines and all other things which are related to the honorable servants of Allah will only be an expression of respect and honor except that if we believe in their divinity or lordship.

The prostration of angels before Adam and prostration of brothers of Yusuf in front of Yusuf has come in the Holy Qur'an. 16

No one interprets the action of the angels or the action of the brothers of Yusuf as *'ibadah* of Adam or Yusuf. The point is that the prostrators did not consider the least position of 'divinity' or 'lordship' for the prostrated ones and never did they take them as God nor the source of divine actions. Therefore, their actions were purely an expression of respect and not *'ibadah* or worship.

When the Wahhabis are faced with such verses they at once say: "The reason that these actions were not prostration of the prostrated ones was that it was performed by the command of God."

Although it is true that all these actions together with the action of brothers of Yusuf in front of Yusuf was by the command and satisfaction of Allah, yet the Wahhabis are heedless of one point and it is this that the very essence of their action (i.e. prostration) too was not *'ibadah*. And it was due to this that God commanded for that action.

If the reality of the action amounted to worship of the prostrated one, then God would have never ordered it.

Say: Surely Allah does not enjoin indecency, do you say against Allah what you do not know? (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf, 7:28)

In short, the order and command of God does not change the essence of action. Before the command of God, the essence or nature of action should be non-*ibadah*; then only the command of God will pertain to it. It can never be imagined that the 'essence' of one action is *ibadah* but due to the command of God in performing that action it automatically becomes non-*ibadah*. This reply which we have repeatedly heard from the Wahhabi leaders in Mecca and Medina shows that they have closed the doors in their analysis of Qur'anic teachings.

'Ibadah has an independent essence and concept for itself which is sometimes commanded for and sometimes prohibited. That is to say, an affair which in its essence is *'ibadah*, is ordered by God such as salat and fasting and sometimes prohibits it for example fasting on the day of Eid. Whenever the prostration of angels and sons of Ya'qub (a) is, in its essence, *'ibadah* of Adam and Yusuf, then ordering for its performance will not change it to non-*'ibadah*.

The Basis Of Solving The Dispute

Respected readers should realize that the basis of solving most of the controversial matters between the Wahhabis and us lies in analyzing the concept of *'ibadah* and unless and until *'ibadah* is not interpreted in logical terms and we cannot reach to an agreement with an impartial person with regards to it and any kind of talk or discussion will be useless.

Therefore, a person of research should deeply study and investigate this matter (more than what we have mentioned) and should not be deceived by the interpretation of most of the dictionaries which often intend to give an abstract explanation of a word and not its actual analysis. In this regard, pondering over the verses is the best guidance.

Unfortunately, all the Wahhabi writers and some of those writers who wish to refute their beliefs have given greater importance to secondary matters rather than laying emphasis on this point.

To sum up, a Wahabi says:

"Most of the actions which you perform with regard to the Holy Prophet (S) or Imam is *'ibadah* and necessarily results in polytheism in worship". For this reason we have to disarm him with the precise interpretation of the word of *'ibadah*.

For making our objective clear, we shall now bring examples of those actions which the Wahhabis show to be worshipping of the dead. We remind you that all of them like our other ordinary actions, can be fulfilled in two ways: Either it will be counted as '*Ibadah*' or not.

1. Seeking intercession from the Holy Prophet (S) and the virtuous ones.

- 2. Asking for *shifa*' (cure) from the *Awliya*' *Allah*.
- 3. Request for fulfilling one's need from the divine leaders.
- 4. Respecting and honoring the one in grave.
- 5. Seeking help from the Holy Prophet (S) and others.

They say: Shafa'a (intercession) by decree of the verse

is from the actions of Allah just as shifa' is from the actions of Allah,

and asking or requesting from the actions of Allah from someone other than Him will amount to his worship.

Here, it is necessary to interpret the Actions of Allah and mention what are the Actions of Allah?

The reply to this is as such: "Any kind of *shafa'a* and *shifa'* of the sick which the doer is independent in fulfilling them (not that he has achieved this privilege from somewhere and that he is in need of the strength and power of some superior being) will be counted as the Divine Action.

To request such an action from anyone is accompanied with the belief in his 'divinity' and 'lordship' and naturally will amount to *'ibadah* and worship.

However, if seeking *shafa'a* and *shifa'* from someone is not accompanied with this belief but rather, the person seeking *shafa'a* reckons the intercessor to be a doer who while being a servant of Allah, relies on a superior power in his actions and affairs and accomplishes them by His Wish and Will, then in such a case making a request will not be accompanied with the belief in 'divinity' and 'lordship'.

The same explanation prevails for the matter of request for fulfilment of needs and or asking for help from someone other than Allah.

Request for fulfilment of needs has two forms: one of them may be reckoned to be 'ibadah and the second to be having no relation with 'ibadah. This explanation is not only a limit of demarcation between 'ibadah and non-'ibadah concerning this action but is a general rule which separates monotheism and polytheism from each other in all the causes and effects.

The belief in the effect of antibiotics in killing the microbes and curing the sick can be one of the two

ways. If we imagine it to be independent in life and existence or independent in its action and effect and reckon it to be needless in a superior being (i.e. Allah) then in such a case we have imagined it as a small god which is independent in its actions. And if we unknowingly respect and honor it, we have considered it as Allah and our actions will be 'ibadah. And asking any help from it will be shirk and amount to worshiping it.

However, if we consider it as a possible being whose life, effects and actions are dependent on a superior one and a being which gives life and does not accomplish any task without His Wise Will, then our belief will be exactly *tawhid*. In the realm of existence no one is effective except Him (*la muathar fil Wujud illa hua*).

Thus we have reminded you that the solution to the disputes and the disarming the opposite person in most of the matters concerning monotheism (*tawhid*) and polytheism (*shirk*) is dependent on the analysis of *'ibadah* and sometimes the meaning of 'divinity' and 'lordship' and understanding the Divine actions.

Incidentally, the actions of the ignorant Arabs were linked all in all with the belief in the divinity and lordship of the idols and they considered them as the absolute authority in some of the divine actions. They believed that God had handed over the reins of these affairs to them and if they wished, they could give intercession to any one or can reject intercession of anyone they wished so.

This is the abstract of our discussion. For a more detailed explanation interested readers can refer to the books:

- 1. معالم التوحيد (Ma'alim Al-Tawhid) 17 and
- 2. التوحيد والشرك في القرأن (Al-Tawhid wa Al-Shirk fi Al-Qur'an) التوحيد والشرك في القرأن القرأن على القرأن القرأن القرأن على القرأن ا
 - 1. In the Holy Qur'an too, sometimes this meaning has been utilized such as in Surah Shu'ara:

That you have enslaved the Children of Israel—is that the favour with which you reproach me?' (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Shu'ara, 26:22)

- 2. Known also as Surah Bani Israel.
- <u>3.</u> When it is said that the idols are god it does not necessarily mean that they are the Creators or that they are managing the affairs of this world. Rather God is having a wider meaning which includes real and imaginary gods. Whenever we reckon some being to be the source of divine activities and imagine that some of the affairs of God like intercession and forgiveness has been entrusted to him, then we have considered him as god, of course a small god before a bigger God!
- 4. Also refer to Surah Al-Tawbah no. 9, verse 43 and Surah Al-Nahl no. 16, verse 63.
- 5. Mohammad Jawad Balaghi (1865–1933 A.D.), was an Iraqi Shia Muslim religious authority, author, poet, and polemicist. His two major works, Al-Hoda ila din Al-Mos®afa and Al-Rehla Al-Madrasiya were popular as rebuttal against Christian missionaries in Iraq.
- 6. Tafsir Aala Al-Rahman, vol. 1, p. 57.
- 7. Kashf Al-Asrar, p. 29.
- وَمَن يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ .Surah Aale Imran, no, 3, verse 135.

- 9. Surah Al-Zumar, no. 39, verse 44. قُل لَلَّه الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا
- اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُون اللَّهِ .31 Surah Al-Tawbah, no. 9, verse اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُون اللَّهِ
- 11. Surah Qasas, no. 28, verse 73; Surah Al-Naml, no. 27, verse 60-64; Surah Al-Zumar, no. 39, verse 5-6.
- اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُون اللَّهِ .31 Surah Al-Tawbah, no. 9, verse اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُون اللَّهِ
- مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ .Surah Al-Baqarah, no, 2, verse 255
- 14. Al-Milal wa Al-Nihal, vol. 2, page 244.
- لًا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَىٰ .15. Surah Al-Shura, no, 42, verse 23
- 16. Baqarah, verse 34 and Yusuf, verse 100.
- 17. معالم التوحيد في القران الكريم محاضرات الشيخ جعفر السبحاني Ma'alim Al-Tawhid fi Al-Qur'an Al-Karim Muhazirat Al-Sheikh Ja'far Subhani by Ja'far Ilhadi (vol. 1) published by Mo'assasa Imam Al-Sadiq, Qom, 2000.
- 18. Written by Ja'far Subhani. Published by Mo'assasa Imam Al-Sadiq, Qom, 2005.

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