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Polytheism

Polytheism1 الشِّرك

Caution Against Polytheism

التَّحذيرُ مِنَ الشِّرك

1ـ رسولُ اللهِ (صَلَّيَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَ آلِهِ) ـ لعبد اللّه بن مسعود ـ: يابنَ مَسعودٍ ، إيّاكَ أن تُشرِكَ بِاللّهِ طَرفَةَ عَينٍ وإن نُشِرتَ بِالمِنشارِ ، أو قُطِّعتَ ، أو صُلِبتَ ، أو أُحرِقتَ بِالنارِ.

1– The Prophet (S) said, 'O Ibn Mas'aud, beware of ever associating anything with Allah for even the twinkling of an eye, even if you are to be cut up with a saw, amputated, crucified or burnt with fire.'[Makarim al-Akhlaq, v. 2, p. 357, no. 2660]

Instruction of Polytheism

تَعليمُ الشِّرك

2ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السَّلامُ): إنَّ بَني أُمَيَّةَ أطلَقُوا لِلنّاسِ تَعليمَ الإيمانِ ولَم يُطلِقُوا تَعليمَ الشِّركِ ؛ لِكَي إذا حَمَلُوهُم عليهِ لَم يَعرِفُوهُ.

2– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) narrated, 'Verily the Umayyads used to freely point out people's faith to them [condescendingly], but did not freely point out polytheism, so that when it came to their converting them [the people] to it, they would not be able to recognise it.'[al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 415, no. 1]

The Absolute Minimum of Polytheism

أدنَى الشِّركِ

3ـ الإمامُ الباقرُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) ـ لَمّا سُئلَ عن أدنَى الشِّركِ ـ: مَن قالَ لِلنَّواةِ: إنَّها حَصاةٌ ، ولِلحَصاةِ: إنّها نَواةٌ ، ثُمّ دانَ بِهِ.

3– Imam al-Baqir (a.s.) was once asked what the absolute minimum of polytheism was, to which he replied, 'It is to call fruit kernels stones and vice versa, and to believe them as such.'[al-Kafi, p. 397, no. 1]

4ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) ـ لمّا سُئل عَن أدنَى الشرك ـ: مَنِ ابتَدَعَ رَأياً فَأحَبَّ علَيهِ أو أبغَضَ علَيهِ.

4– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) was once asked what the absolute minimum of polytheism was, to which he replied, 'It is to contrive a ruling and falsely cause people to take sides for and against it.'[al-Kafi, no. 2]

Hidden Polytheism

الشِّركُ الخَفِيُّ

5ـ رسولُ اللهِ (صَلَّيَ اللهُ عَلَيهِ وَ آلِهِ): إيّاكَ وما يُعتَذَرُ مِنهُ ، فإنَّ فيهِ الشِّركَ الخَفِيَّ.

5– The Prophet (S) said, 'Beware of committing anything that warrants justification, for verily that is hidden polytheism.'[Bihar al-Anwar, v. 78, p. 200, no. 28]

6ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) ـ في قولِهِ تعالى: «وَما يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ...» ـ: هُو الرَّجُلُ يقولُ: لَولا فُلانٌ لَهَلَكتُ ، ولَولا فُلانٌ لَأصَبتُ كذا وكذا، ولَولا فُلانٌ لَضاعَ عِيالي ، ألا تَرى أ نّهُ قد جَعَلَ للّهِ شَريكاً في مُلكِهِ يَرزُقُهُ ويَدفَعُ عَنهُ؟!قالَ [الراوي] قلتُ: فيقولُ: لَولا أنَّ اللّهَ مَنَّ عَليَّ بِفلانٍ لَهَلَكتُ ؟ قال: نَعَم ، لا بَأسَ بهذا .

6– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said when interpreting the Qur'anic verse: ***"And most of them do not believe in Allah without ascribing partners to Him",*** 'This is in reference to man's statement: "Were it not for 'x' I would surely have perished", or "Were it not for 'x' I would indeed have been afflicted" or "Were it not for 'x' my family would be at a loss." Do you not see that he has associated a partner to Allah in His Kingdom giving him sustenance and repelling misfortune from him?' He was subsequently asked, 'What

if one were to say, “Were it not for Allah granting me x’s help, I would have perished…?” Imam replied, 'There is nothing wrong with saying things like this.’[Tafsir al-’Aayyashi, v. 2, p. 200, no. 96]

7ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) ـ أيضا ـ: شِركُ طاعَةٍ ولَيسَ شِركَ عِبادَةٍ.

7– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said when interpreting the Qur’anic verse: ***“And most of them do not believe in Allah without ascribing partners to Him”***, ‘This refers to ascribing partners in Allah's obedience, not [just] in His worship.’[al-Kafi, v. 2, p. 397, no. 4]

8ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ): إنَّ الشِّركَ أخفى مِن دَبيبِ النَّملِ . وقالَ: مِنهُ تَحويلُ الخاتَمِ لِيَذكُرَ الحاجَةَ وشِبهُ هذا .

8– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said, 'Polytheism is more discreet than the crawling of an ant, and includes things like turning one's ring to make a wish, and other such [superstitions].’[Ma’ani al-Akhbar, p. 379, no. 1]

9ـ الإمامُ الصّادقُ (عَلَيهِ السّلامُ) ـ في قولِهِ تعالى: «وما يُؤْمِنُ أَكْثَرُهُمْ بِاللّهِ إلّا وَهُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ» ـ: كانُوا يَقولونَ: نُمطَرُ بِنَوءِ كذا ، وبِنَوءِ كذا ، ومِنها أ نّهُم كانوا يَأتُونَ الكُهّانَ فَيُصَدِّقُونَهُم بما يَقولونَ .

9– Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said when interpreting the Qur’anic verse: ***“And most of them do not believe in Allah without ascribing partners to Him”***, ‘This refers to when people used to say, 'We are being rained on from the storm of x, or the storm of y [referring to various false gods]. And they used to consult soothsayers and believe whatever they told them.’[Bihar al-Anwar, v. 58, p. 317, no. 8]

1. Translator's Note: The word shirk in Arabic implies a much wider meaning that the English 'polytheism' which has been defined as: worshipping or believing in more than one deity, idolatry. In Islam, its purport, in addition to ascribing partners to Allah, includes any form of association of anything or anyone with Allah's authority, His worship, His Names, His attributes, and His Greatness. This includes, therefore, vices such as self-worth, pride, showing-off, etc... Shirk has been translated in the text as polytheism for ease of translation.

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