

What does Islam teach about Shirk?

1. Shirk is the verbal or conceptual or practical association of anything with Allah in His person or attributes or works or in obedience due to Him alone.
2. According to the holy Qur'an, shirk is the greatest sin in Islam.
Q (31:13) says; “...to associate others with Allah is a tremendous sin...”
3. Prophet Muhammad PBUH grouped shirk among the seven greatest sins and the first of all. He expressly said; “*The biggest sin is setting equals with Allah*”
4. He also cautioned Muslims not to commit shirk even though one is in great danger of death.
He said; “*Do not associate anything with Allah even though they try to kill or burn you*” (Bukhar)
5. Within Islam, shirk is an unforgivable crime if it remains unpardoned before death.
Q (4:116) states; “*Indeed Allah does not forgive those who associate partners with Him but He forgives whom He pleases for other sins...*”
6. The holy mentions various forms of shirk as stated in **Q (3:64)**;
“...that we shall worship none save Allah and that we shall not associate anything with Him and that some of us shall not take others for Lords besides Allah”
7. The first form of shirk mentioned in the above verse is where anything besides Allah is worshipped like praying to stones, trees, animals, heavenly bodies, tombs, human beings and others. This is called shirk Akbar (major shirk).
8. Major shirk involves showing more love to others other than Allah. Major shirk turns a person away from Islam.
9. Another form of shirk mentioned in the verse (3:64) is associating partners with Allah by supposing that other things or beings possess the same attributes as Allah.
10. The belief in the three god-head and that the son and the holy spirit are eternal like Allah or that there is a creator of evil and creator of good as in Christianity and Zoroastrianism respectively fall under this form of shirk.
11. The third form of shirk talked about in **Q (3:64)** is where some people take others as their Lords by following their authoritative commands at the expense of Allah's instructions.
Q (9:31) further says; “*They take their priests and their doctors of law to be their lords besides Allah and they take as their lord Christ the son of Mary; yet they were commanded to worship but one Allah...*”

12. There is another form of shirk called shirk Aswigar (minor shirk) where one worships to show-off or to gain fame or for worldly benefit e.g paying sadaq to gain praise from people. It does not turn a Muslim away from Islam but it reduces one's faith and reduces his acts of worship.

1. There is also shirk al-Khafi (invisible shirk) which involves blind submission to one's own desires which are contrary to what Islam teaches. For example a woman who abuses Hijaab, a man who abuses cutting the trouser, swearing to anything other than Allah and the like.

Q (25:43) says; *“Have you seen him who made gods of his own desires?”*

2. While emphasizing the dangers of shirk al-Khafi (invisible shirk), Prophet Muhammad PBUH said;

“I fear for my people of shirk and their hidden desires... they will not worship the sun or the moon or the stones or the idols but they will make a show of their works and their hidden desires shall be such that one of them will wake up in the morning fasting and a desire out of his many desires shall come before him and he will leave his fasting”

CAUSES OF SHIRK IN SOCIETY

1. Need for quick money especially among the youths.
2. Need to cure certain diseases that may seem incurable.
3. Need to get children especially among women.
4. Some people commit shirk in form of bewitching others due to envy.
5. Shirk is committed by some people due to ignorance about the concept of Tawheed.
6. Invisible shirk is committed by so many Muslims unknowingly.
7. Need to get blessings and fight misfortunes.
8. Need to be praised and love for popularity in society causes shirk al-Aswigar.
9. Need for material gains by some people.
10. Need to gain political power.
11. Need to associate with strong political figures in the community.
12. Desire to be loved especially among women.
13. Some people commit shirk due to peer influence.
14. Need to foretell the future events.
15. Excessive love for our fellow human beings like the Baganda and Kabaka.
16. Declining levels of faith among the Muslims.
17. Need for fame.
18. Need to revenge on those who wrong others.
19. Desire to seek protection or help in homes.
20. Strong belief in Traditional and cultural practices.
21. Producing children of the same sex.
22. High rate of unemployment.

EFFECTS OF SHIRK IN ISLAM

1. It leads to death of people where it involves bewitching.
2. A Mushirk loses respect in society.
3. It leads to family breakdown where one partner is a Mushirk while the other one is a believer.
4. Shirk is punishable by Allah on the Day of Judgement.
5. A Mushirk is not allowed to be married except by a fellow Mushirk.
6. A Mushirk is isolated by fellow Muslims.
7. It tarnishes the name of Islam.
8. Major shirk is one of the main causes of human sacrifice in society today.
9. It leads to wastage of money.
10. Mental disorder may result in the Mushirk.
11. Leads to enmity in society.

MEASURES A MUSLIM SHOULD TAKE AVOID SHIRK?

1. By developing sincere intention in any act of worship.
2. Observing prayer which restrains one from shameful acts.
3. Avoiding friends who involve in shirk.
4. Avoiding cultural taboos which lead to shirk.
5. One should involve Allah in events which he intends to do.
6. One should not obey any authority even if a parent if he /she is required to perform shirk.
7. One should swear to Allah alone.
8. Praying to Allah to avoid temptations.
9. To believe in Allah's Qadar.
10. Always praising Allah in Adhikaar.
11. Observing Sunna (Prophet's practices)
12. Continuous recitation of the holy Qur'an.
13. Attending Islamic preachings to know the dangers of shirk and its manifestations (signs).
14. Having wudhu all the time to avoid satanic temptations.
15. Sticking on supplication (Duwa)
(The Reader should expand on the points)