

Muqaalaat e Kaazimi series No. 2

**Only You We Worship
and
Only Your Help We Seek**
'Ibaadah wa Isti'aana'

Articles of
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TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

Knowledge has a very special position in Islam. It's attainment is compulsory upon every one of us to the extent that we are ordered to travel to the far reaches of this planet in its search. However, today a critical intellectual deficit exists within the Ummah, the results of which can be seen in the irrational, illogical and contradictory beliefs and actions of many Muslims. What is more fatal is that some of us believe we have, as an Ummah, never been more knowledgeable of our religion!

Unfortunately today many of us have confused knowledge with information. Just because we know a verse (or more accurately, know of a verse) does in no way mean we have knowledge of that verse.

There is a genuine concern and desire to learn about Islam but in this high-speed society we demand quick and convenient knowledge. People readily seek their Islam through anonymous and dangerous sources such as the Internet and other multimedia but appear reluctant to seek out the traditional masters of knowledge. We have lost the concept of personalised teaching, the relationship between the teacher and student has broken down. Is this any surprise at a time when the relationship between the Muslim and his Prophet is challenged from within Islam! Knowledge is as much passed through words as through the learning experience. Whilst sitting at the feet of teachers and Shuyookh one picks up the mannerisms and thought processes that have been passed down from the Saaliheen through the generations.

Our apparent desire for knowledge also highlights the contradictions within us – for example we don't even have the decency to begin to learn the Arabic language! That blessed language spoken by our beloved Prophet. Surely our love for Allah Ta'aala and His Prophet would drive us to learn the language

they chose for the teaching of our Islam! Instead we appear very keen to even drive Arabic out of our Khutbahs on Eid and Jumuah! May Allah Ta'aala, through the waseela of His Prophet, protect us from these self proclaimed intellectuals!

We are products of an education system that has been hijacked into a production line for capitalist economies. It no longer aims to produce intellectuals or transform unlettered men into refined humans. It now aims only to produce people with a narrow ability of a particular technical process – be it engineering, commerce or law. From as young as 13 or 14 children are forced to 'major' or study only a few subjects. So if today we have a degree, are we knowledgeable? We hear stories of graduates arriving at work without numeric skills or the ability to construct even a basic essay!

Just because today we have a Western degree in a particular subject does not imply our minds are qualified and able to understand and appraise Islamic teachings and scriptures. A graduate's ego often forces him or her to believe he or she has the right to appraise and challenge established teachings in the light of their 'enlightenment'. This ego also wishes to express and prove itself by challenging the orthodoxy and establishing a new way, even though it clothes it in the guise of 'reverting to original Islam'. This may explain the parallel rise, in the last two centuries, in the challenge to established madhabs / beliefs and the formation of the new 'landless middle class'.

This same ego also bars us from sitting at the feet of the masters to learn even the basics of the traditional sciences. It also forces us into the lair of deviant sects who prey on this ego by giving it licence to interpret the sources in a way 'we see fit'.

Some of our contemporaries swiftly disregard established teachings and practices with excuses such as 'I don't understand it or it doesn't make sense to me'. How absurd are these statements!

What do they mean they don't understand? Since when has the veracity of Islamic beliefs and practices been subject to their limited understanding, the very understanding that has been shaped and formed in the hands of the production line education system. How can such a mind comprehend the outcomes derived by minds such as Raazi and Ghazaali. How can they even contemplate that their mind, that can barely function before its had 8 hours of sleep and several headache tablets, could even begin to follow the reasoning of Imam Abu Haneefa who prayed all night, traded all day and still produced derivations that leave us overwhelmed even today!

We also hear the demands 'Show me a hadith or verse which says you can do this'. Sir, What are you going to do with that hadith or verse? Do you possess the scholastic training or capacity to link such primary sources to inferences and conclusions? Would you not be better served by referencing back to the statements of the traditional Ulama from the golden age of Islam. Often your very questions brave your ignorance of the basic principles of Islamic Law! You seek a verse or Sahih hadith for acts of Fadhaail whilst you base many of your fundamentals on Khabr ul Waahids!

It is in this environment that these articles of Kaazimi sahib have been translated. Many of our naive friends misinterpret this famous verse of Surah Fatiha and state that because we only worship Allah Ta'aala all other respect is Shirk; standing up for someone is Shirk! sitting down for someone is Shirk! These articles show this interpretation of Ibaadah to be wrong. Some also claim that help should only be sought from Allah Ta'aala. This article will show that this interpretation is primitive, naive and contrary to other Quranic verses and natural law!

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Article No 1

Only You we worship and only You we seek help from

When the faithful servant stands before his Lord he praises Him, eulogises Him and exalts Him. What is *Al hamdu lillaahi rabbil aalameen*? It is but the Praise of Allah Ta'aala, *ArRahmaan Nir Raheem* is His eulogy and *Maaliki Yowm idDeen* is His exaltation! This Praise of Allah Ta'aala, this eulogy of Allah Ta'aala and this exaltation of Allah Ta'aala is from the etiquette and humility of His court. The servant has so far addressed his Deity as the absent (with nouns of the (*Ghaaib*) third person) but has now reached that position in His court when, as though the absent has suddenly become present, he explicitly calls out '*Iyyaaka Na'budu wa Iyyaaka Nasta'een*', implying 'Oh Allah Ta'aala! You have given me the honour of being present in Your court and the status of being present with the 'absent'. (Consequently) I will now call out to You with pronouns of present¹ and proclaim *Iyyaaka Na'budu wa Iyyaaka Nasta'een* (We only worship You and only seek help from You).

Observe that both Ibaadah and Istiaana are specific to Allah Ta'aala. Allah Ta'aala is the deity and He is the *Musta'aan* (helper). Laa Raaib! Laa Raaib! (There is no doubt! There is no doubt!) We believe and we confirm there is no Deity but Him and no *Musta'aan* other than Him.

What is Ibaadah

Some people adopt a lopsided² approach to defining Ibaadah. It is true that *Taazeem* (respect) is at the heart of Ibaadah and

¹ The worshipper has referred to Allah Ta'aala as the 3rd person with the pronoun 'He' but now, as if Allah Taa'la is before him, he uses the pronoun 'You'.

² Kaazimi sahib uses the term 'Ifraat Tafreet' which refers to something misshaped, excessive in some respects and deficient in others. A definition has to be both inclusive and exclusive 'Jaame Maane', it must include all its

without it there is no Ibaadah – Undoubtedly *Taazeem* is the soul of Ibaadah – but some people (go as far as to) perceive each and every show of respect to be Ibaadah, and this is wrong. Ibaadah, in reality, is

Aqsaa Gaaya'tul Khudhoo wa Tazallul,
'the ultimate form of respect and humility'

We use the term worship to only refer to that level and that type of respect beyond which there is no further or higher level. Worship is nothing else but this.

(Notice that) There is respect and there is *Aqsaa Gaaya'tul Khudhoo wa Tazallul*. Apart from Allah Ta'aala, all others such as His Prophets, His Awliya and the Shaheed (martyrs) are respect worthy but only Allah Ta'aala is worthy of *Aqsaa Gaaya'tul Khudhoo wa Tazallul*. So³ respect is due to Prophets and Awliya! Furthermore, permit me to say that Allah Ta'aala has even ordered the respect of those stones that have a link (*nisbah*) with the people of Allah Ta'aala⁴.

Consider the House of Allah Ta'aala (*Kaabah*), is it or is it not respected? No doubt it is respected. So can the *Kaabah* be respected without respect? Undoubtedly it is shown respect. So if you consider all types of respect to be Ibaadah then the *Kaabah* must necessarily also be a deity⁵. However the *Kaabah* is not a Deity, it is simply Allah Ta'aala's appointed direction of worship. Some people spread the mistaken

constituents and exclude all those outside its scope. Kaazimi sahib explains that some people mistakenly include matters within Ibaadah which are actually outside the scope of Ibaadah. Paradoxically these reductionists actual expand this definition!

³ This is for those who think that because respect is shown to Allah it must not be shown to anyone else.

⁴ For example the Maqaam ul Ibraaheem, Allah Ta'aala said 'And take the Maqaam of Ibraaheem as a place of Prayer'

⁵ Because it is shown respect and these short sighted people reason that all types of respect are worship.

ideology that whoever and whatever is respected is (necessarily) worshipped and as soon as one shows respect one becomes *Mushrik*! Such people merely create problems for the simple and straightforward Muslim. If we consider the whole journey to the *Haramain Tayyibain* the whole spectacle becomes apparent⁶. However I was explaining that considering all forms of respect as worship is a great excess and raises a fitna in the Deen. A hadith from the famous collection of Ibn Majah comes to mind in which the Prophet addressed the *Kaabah* in amazement 'Oh *Kaabah*, what can be said of your greatness, you are very great et al'.

If you consider all respect to be Ibaadah then stop considering the *Kaabah* respectful. And if you consider it respectful then, as per your own *fatwas*, consider it also a deity. Our belief is that respect per se is not Ibaadah, only *Aqsa Gaaya'tul Khudhoo wa Tazallul* is Ibaadah i.e. that form of respect beyond which greater respect cannot even be imagined.

Allah Ta'aala says:

'Verily Safa and Marwah are of the signs of Allah Ta'aala'
(Baqarah v158)

In other words the rocks touched by the feet of Syeduna Ismail and Syeda Hajira are respect worthy.

'And whoever respects the Signs of Allah Ta'aala, it is (because) of the taqwa of the hearts' (Hajj v32)

This proves that the respect and honour of the items linked to Allah Ta'aala is not Shirk but is a sign of Tawheed because only those with the love of Allah Ta'aala know the worth of the things directly or indirectly linked to Him.

⁶ Where respect is shown to the Kaa'bah, Black Stone, Maqaam ul Ibraheem; Safa, Marwah, Spring of ZamZam etc etc.

So these signs of Allah Ta'aala that are respected, are they Allah Ta'aala?⁷ If you are going to view the signs of Allah Ta'aala as Deities then there will be thousands of Deities! Allah Ta'aala Himself proclaims about respecting His signs:

'And whoever respects the Signs of Allah Ta'aala, it is (because) of the taqwa of the hearts' (Hajj v32)

This proves that respect is not Shirk, only *Aqsa Gaaya'tul Khudhoo wa Tazallul* is Shirk and no Muslim shows this level of respect for anyone other than Allah Ta'aala.

Oh Allah Ta'aala! Only You are our Deity and we do not worship anyone other than You. You have now understood the meaning of *Iyyaaka Na'budu*. (So let's turn to) *Iyyaaka Nasta'een* - Oh Allah Ta'aala only You we seek Istiaana from.

What is Istiaana?

Let me tell you that just as all forms of respect are not worship not every form of seeking help is Istiaana. ⁸If the Istiaana mentioned in this verse did refer to every form of help it would cause a major problem, for Allah Ta'aala has Himself ordered⁹

'And help each other in good deeds and piety'
(Al Maaida v2)

Ta'aawanu (the Arabic term used in this verse to denote 'help each other') is from the grammatical chapter known as 'Tafaaul'¹⁰ that gives rise to the notion of partnership and

⁷ Kaazimi sahib is asking those who consider all respect to be worship if they consider all the things even they respect to be deities?

⁸ Kaazimi sahib now provides evidence for the claim that *Iyyaaka Nasta'een* does not refer to each and every type of Istiaana.

⁹ If the verse referred to all types of help Allah Ta'aala would not order this.

¹⁰ In Arabic the shape of a word influences the interpretation of the meaning of its root letters. Different shapes of the same root letters give different

mutuality. Consequently this verse orders you to help them and them to help you, that they seek your help in good deeds and you seek theirs. Now if every Istiaana was Shirk what would this verse mean? Would it not be Shirk to seek help in good deeds? But¹¹ the Quran orders us to do it! This reveals that deeming every help under *Iyyaaka Nasta'een* is wrong, just as viewing every respect as 'Ultimate respect' (or Ibaadah) is wrong. The respect known as 'Ultimate respect' is a specific type of respect and so too is specific the type of help referred to under *Iyyaaka Nasta'een*.

If we seek help believing the helper to be the ultimate and true helper and personally sovereign in helping¹² and able to help as he pleases then that would be Shirk. This is because seeking help whilst believing the helper to be personally sovereign is tantamount to showing a form of 'ultimate respect' and in effect a form of worship.

¹³We never believe that the one we seek help from can help us without the Will and Permission of Allah Ta'aala. We believe Allah Ta'aala has given him the power to help us and it is through this Divinely given power that we are aided. He helps us with Allah Ta'aala's command and he helps us with Allah Ta'aala's will. If Allah Ta'aala did not will he could not help. If Allah Ta'aala had not wanted he could not have helped. Allah Ta'aala has not given him any personally sovereign power. This is because personal sovereignty is an attribute of divinity and a divine attribute cannot be found in a non-deity. Thus we interpret the verse¹⁴ as 'Oh Allah Ta'aala, we only seek Your help as the True Helper'

perspectives of their meaning. In this case the root is Awn – help – and in the shape Tafaaul (Ta'aawun) it means mutual help, in the shape Istifaal (Ista'een) it means seeking help whilst in If'aal it takes a causative meaning.

¹¹ But how could seeking help in good deeds be Shirk when He Himself has ordered us to do it!

¹² That he needs no one, answers to no one and is subject to no one's Will

¹³ Kaazimi sahib now presents the belief of the Ahl us Sunnah.

¹⁴ The part of the verse 'Iyyaaka Nasta'een'.

In many places of the Quran Allah Ta'aala has ordered 'And seek help through patience and prayer'. The Baa used in this verse is 'sababiya' and means cause or waseela (means). So patience and prayer are waseelas to help. The help will be Allah Ta'aala's, and just as patience and prayer are waseelas so too are the Awliya. And just as good deeds are a waseela so too are the people who perform them! This is why we take the Awliya as waseela. We do not take the Awliya themselves as waseela but take their attribute of Wilaaya as waseela. We base the waseela on their righteousness and righteous deeds¹⁵. There are many ahadith in which the pious people of Allah Ta'aala have sought Allah Ta'aala's help through the waseela of good deeds. And it is this waseela of good deeds upon which the waseela of the pious is based. We explicitly state that the Prophets, Awliya and pious are our waseela and Allah Ta'aala is our Helper, He aids us, He fulfils our needs and it is He Himself who has deemed righteousness; virtuous deeds; good acts; piety; patience and prayer as waseelas. The people who are patient and those who are linked to prayer and good deeds are our waseela because of their good deeds. We do not seek their waseela exclusive of their good deeds because their waseela is based on their connection to righteous deeds. The waseela, that is Istiaana, of good deeds is proven from the Quran

'And seek help from patience and prayer'

So if you are to denote every Istiaana (seeking of help) as Shirk what are you to do with this verse?! It should be Shirk to seek help through patience and prayer because neither patience nor prayer is God. Rather both are forms of Allah Ta'aala's worship. Seeking help from Allah Ta'aala means '*Oh Allah Ta'aala, we acknowledge you as the True Helper and that if*

¹⁵ An ordinary person is never taken as a waseela, only one with special attributes, such as good deeds. The difference between this and an ordinary man is the attribute of good deeds and it is this special attribute that is the basis of the waseela and not simply that person.

You do not wish for it nobody can help us and without Your Intention or Will nobody can help us'.

A question often comes to mind here that if they (the Awliyaa & saaliheen) cannot do anything without the will of Allah Ta'aala then what is their rank and fadeelah?¹⁶

Look, these pious people of Allah Ta'aala help with His will. Without it they cannot help. We thus acknowledge these people as those connected to the Will of Allah Ta'aala. Is this not their fadeelah, that they are connected to His will? Is the one linked to the Will and Intent of Allah Ta'aala not at the epicentre of fadeelah?!¹⁷

It is opportune here to dispel another doubt that could arise when we claim 'We only seek help from you'.¹⁸ This suspicion arises because there is Hasr (exclusivity) in this verse which means 'We only seek help from You and from no one else'.

This is dispelled in the following way. What does Hasr imply?

Hasr necessitates **'the negation of everything other than the mentioned'**.

Take the example of *Laa ilaaha illallaah*, who is mentioned here? (Allah Ta'aala is mentioned so) everything except Allah Ta'aala is negated because everything other than Allah Ta'aala is not mentioned so the divinity of everything, other than Allah Ta'aala, is negated.

¹⁶ They are not special because they can't do anything without Allah's will.

¹⁷ Can there be any greater fadeelah than having all one's action dependant on the will of Allah

¹⁸ The suspicion here is that this verse prohibits seeking help from anyone other than Allah because in this verse we explicitly proclaim 'We only seek Your help'. Thus we exclude seeking help from others. Consequently what is the point of this distinction between seeking help of the True Helper and seeking the help of one who is dependent upon Allah?

Now¹⁹ we state that in *Iyyaaka Nasta'een* the *Iyyaaka* mentions Allah Ta'aala - through the 2nd person suffixed noun (kaaf) - and because He is the only One mentioned in this phrase (the help of) everything other than Him is negated. So from the verse we learn that Istiaana cannot be sought from anyone other than Allah Ta'aala! We cannot seek help from anyone but Allah Ta'aala. So the one from whom we seek help is specifically Allah Ta'aala because it is only He who is mentioned (in this verse) and Hasr negates everything other than the mentioned. Thus everything apart from Allah Ta'aala is negated, so Istiaana cannot be sought from any 'Ghair ullah'

So a question here²⁰ is whether only the dead are Ghair ullah (other than Allah Ta'aala)? Are not the living also 'Ghair ullah'. Some people state it is Shirk to seek help from the dead but permissible to seek help from the living. Oh People! '*Iyyaaka Nasta'een*' contains Hasr and Hasr excludes EVERYTHING other than the mentioned. In this verse are only the dead not mentioned or are the living also not mentioned? Are you to consider the deceased 'ghair ullah' and the living 'Ain ullah'?²¹ I do not know what has happened to the minds of these people!

You seek Istiaana from the eye to see, from the ear to hear, from the tongue to speak, from the hand to hold, from the foot

¹⁹ After you have understood what Hasr does

²⁰ To highlight a contradiction, before answering the original question, Kaazimi sahib puts a question to those who say that help should not be sought from anyone because of this verse but then also say that one should only not seek the help of the dead.

²¹ Kaazimi sahib is asking why these people have an issue with the help of dead and not the living. If the dead are 'other than Allah' then who are the living? Are they Allah Himself? There are only two possibilities, Allah Himself and everything other than Allah. So if they do not take issue with the help of the living then they must consider them NOT to be other than Allah! And if they are not other than Allah there is only one other possibility!

to walk and from the mind to think²². You seek Istiaana from friends, in litigation you seek Istiaana from lawyers, in disputes you seek Istiaana from the police and in good works you seek Istiaana from the wealthy. What is there from which you do not seek Istiaana?!

Tell me, do all these not come within 'everything other than the mentioned'? (Of course they do) so stop seeking Istiaana from them and denote Istiaana from each one as Shirk! In reply (to our demand) we hear the cry 'but all these are alive!' Is Allah Ta'aala not alive?²³

Praise be to Allah Ta'aala, our belief (doctrine) is perfectly clear, perfectly true. We state that whoever seeks the help of a living person believing him to be the True Helper is a Mushrik because there is Hasr in the verse and Hasr excludes everything except the mentioned.²⁴

The living are 'other than the mentioned' and so too are the dead. You will be a Mushrik whether you seek the help of a deceased believing him to be Personally Sovereign and if you seek the help of a living being believing him to be personally sovereign in helping. As long as there is no belief in

²² Kaazimi sahib now returns to clarifying the confusion that help should only be sought from Allah by explaining that because we all need the help and aid of many things such an interpretation is impossible.

²³ A common mistake is to claim these things are not relevant here because they are alive and Shirk is when help is sought from the dead. The paradox here is that Shirk requires similarity and the living are more similar to Allah for He is alive and will never be dead!

²⁴ Hasr can also apply to Istiaana, which refers to a specific type of Istiaana, that which is sought from the True Helper. The Hasr excludes all other types of Istiaana. So the fact there is Hasr in this verse actually supports the belief of the Ahl e Sunnah because without this distinction in Istiaana, it could not logically be specific to Allah.

sovereignty there is no Shirk in seeking help from either the living or the dead²⁵.

Some people state that seeking help from a Ghair ullah implies that Allah Ta'aala is weak - for can Allah Ta'aala not help?! Listen. If seeking help from others proved that Allah Ta'aala was weak and constrained then Allah Ta'aala too is seeking help from people!²⁶ You may ask where has Allah Ta'aala sought help from the people? The Quran itself states

'If you help Allah Ta'aala, He will help you' (Muhammad v7)

'If you help' is a conditional structure. Allah Ta'aala states that if you help Him He will help you. So if anyone claims 'we shall only seek help from Allah Ta'aala' then Sir, Allah Ta'aala has made His help conditional upon you helping Him first! This is because of the principle 'The condition (in this case your helping Allah Ta'aala) must precede the conditional (that Allah Ta'aala will help you)'.

So what does this verse mean? It means 'If you help the Deen of Allah Ta'aala, Allah Ta'aala will help you'? Look! Allah Ta'aala is making you help His deen. Why does He not help it Himself! Is Allah Ta'aala unable to do so? Brother, this help that you give (to the deen) is in effect Allah Ta'aala's help in the same way the helping of the Awliya is the help of Allah Ta'aala - because it is Allah Ta'aala who has given the ability to help. Allah Ta'aala's command is absolute and his Want is absolute. If your help is the help of Allah Ta'aala then the help of every Walli is the help of Allah Ta'aala.

Iyyaaka Na'budu is perfectly clear and *Iyyaaka Nasta'een* is perfectly clear. He is our deity and He is our true Helper.

²⁵ Shirk occurs when you acknowledge a similarity between Allah and any other thing or being. As long as there is no such notion there is no shirk.

²⁶ Allah Ta'aala is pure from all weaknesses and any action of His cannot be proof of a weakness so His seeking help cannot imply a weakness in Allah.

Article No 2

The Mafhool (subject) preceding the fail (verb) gives Hasr (exclusivity)²⁷, in other words, it produces the meaning ‘We only worship You and only seek help from You’, or in other words ‘We do not worship anyone other than You and neither seek the help of any other’. Ibaadah means worship which itself refers to the ultimate level of humility, devotion and attention. In other words it can be referred to as ultimate respect, and consequently it relates to belief.

However some people make the tragic mistake of completely ignoring belief in relation to Ibaadah and see Ibaadah solely and merely in terms of actions. If belief is ignored and Ibaadah is viewed only in terms of actions then the ruling of the sajdah (prostration) of Ibaadah would be the same as the ruling of the sajdah of respect, but it is not! The Ijmah of the Ummah agrees that the sajdah of respect to a *Ghair ullah* is only impermissible whilst the sajdah of Ibaadah is wholly Shirk (polytheism). The distinction between the two is solely based on belief and intention and proves that without the heart’s belief there can be no Ibaadah. As for some Fuqaha declaring certain act as the Ibaadah of *ghair ullah* and consequently Kufr, one must remember this *takfee*²⁸ is fiqhi, not kalaami. The fuqaha discuss actions because belief is outside of their scope. This reveals that mere respect is not worship, only ultimate respect is worship²⁹. Consequently it is said in the Quran

“And whoever respects the Signs of Allah Ta’aala, it is (because) of the taqwa of the hearts’

So when the respect of the Signs of Allah Ta’aala is not Ibaadah but is instead deemed as a sign of the heart’s *Taqwa* how can the respect of the close and beloved people of Allah Ta’aala, with whom most of these signs of Allah Ta’aala are connected, be seen as Ibaadah!

Instead, if it was claimed that the respect of these people IS Ibaadah of Allah Ta’aala then this would certainly be true and correct!

²⁷ Usually the subject follows the verb e.g. Nabudu Allah (we worship Allah) but here we say ‘You we worship’ and this indicates that the most important part of our statement is who we worship.

²⁸ Declaring someone a kaafir

²⁹ If all types of respect were worship then the sajdah of respect would be kufr and not just haraam.

Article No 3

The Worthiness of Worship

The only being that can be worthy of veneration; devotion; utmost respect; absolute humility; humbleness and worship is one that is Personally Absolute; Personally Sovereign; Reliant on none and Self-Existent. That being should be personally sovereign in each one of its qualities and every one of its attributes. In other words none of its qualities or attributes should be (due to) the bestowment of others.

Whoever does not possess such qualities is not worthy of worship!

Clearly these qualities belong only to Allah Ta'aala for only He is Self Existent and is Personally Sovereign in each of His attributes. Consequently He is worthy of worship and Only He. To worship anyone other than Allah Ta'aala is to (implicitly) acknowledge it to also be self existent and personally sovereign, even if the worshipper does not consciously acknowledge his deity to be self existent and personally sovereign. This is because when he considers anything worthy of worship he necessarily considers it to be self existent and personally sovereign. To contemplate a deity without such qualities is irrational and implausible. It was because of this principle³⁰ that Allah Ta'aala declared Mushrik those who worshiped the false deities they fashioned with their own hands, even though they considered them as creation. A creation being a deity is logically and legally impossible and forbidden, and Shirk is always to believe something impossible for that being. Consequently Allah Ta'aala declared Mushrik those who perpetrated this logical impossibility.

³⁰ That worshipping something necessarily implies acknowledging it to be Personally Sovereign and Self Existent.

Istiaana means seeking help and just as Ibaadah is for none except Allah Ta'aala so too Istiaana is specific for this True Deity. The only difference is that in Ibaadah there is no concept of metaphor whilst in Istiaana not only is it possible but fact! A metaphoric deity is impossible but a metaphoric *Musta'aan* is both possible and fact.

We have stated that worthiness of worship requires personal sovereignty. So as personal sovereignty cannot even be imagined for any other (than Allah Ta'aala) so too worship, in any form, of any other is impossible.

However with Istiaana two scenarios are possible; one where the *Musta'aan* is personally sovereign and two where the ability to help is not personal (but) is (the result of) a bestowment from Allah Ta'aala. It is clear that Allah Ta'aala has the power to bestow this dependant ability upon any servant and anything within His power is intrinsically feasible and belief in a feasible matter cannot in any way be Shirk!

Some people even consider taking the *waseela* of Allah Ta'aala's accepted people to relieve needs as Shirk! They are enveloped in a great error! Similarly in severe error are those who consider it Shirk to believe in Allah Ta'aala's bestowed and dependant power in His beloved people. We have stated that Shirk only occurs when one believes a matter that is *Mumtane LiZaatihi* (impossible)³¹. It is clearly plausible for someone to be a *waseela* and the bestowment of dependant power is not impossible. So how can either of these beliefs be Shirk?! Of course the bestowment of Divinity or possession of sovereign power is logically impossible and whoever believes such for any creation - that Allah Ta'aala has granted someone the rank of divinity or sovereign power - will be deemed a Clear Mushrik. This is because that person believes a matter that is both logically and legally impossible and implausible for Him. This

³¹ To believe a matter for Allah that is impossible or inappropriate for Him, e.g for Him to be born or to give birth.

statement of ours should have alleviated all the doubts and suspicions that some people create based on their lack of understanding. For example³², claiming that taking the *waseela*, of persons respected in the court of Allah Ta'aala, is Shirk. They base this assertion on the fact that Allah Ta'aala declared Mushrik the Polytheists of Arabia who took their idols as a *waseela* in Allah Ta'aala's court.³³

(This assumption is wrong because) They were not declared Mushrik because they thought their idols were *waseela* in Allah's court (even though it was utterly impossible for sound minds to consider such idols of stone as *waseela*) but were declared Mushrik because they worshipped them! Shirk was not that they took idols as *waseela* but Shirk was that they worshipped them! The fact that they worshipped their idols is mentioned in the same verse that mentions them being a *Waseela*. Look carefully at the statement of Allah Ta'aala:

'We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah'
(Zumar v3)

Although considering idols respected in Allah Ta'aala's court was wrong the Shirk was due to their worship and not *waseela*.

By reflecting upon the world system it becomes clear that all the affairs of this creation require mutual help and co-operation. Benefiting each other and co-operating with one another is seen as a natural phenomenon and is found in all the creation between the Land and the Sky, and could not be possible without this Law. Specifically, the human cannot survive without these relationships! If seeking help from any creation was impermissible human society would disintegrate!

As an example take a single human and notice how wide ranging are his daily needs. Firstly, look at his birth, he is not

born without parents. After his birth, his upbringing is linked to his parents and other specific people. For nourishment; clothing; housing and other matters he relies upon innumerable items and the favours of countless people. In childhood, youth and old age, indeed from birth to death and from cradle to grave, at each and every stage he depends upon the aid of others.

For his nourishment he needs crops, for his attire he needs clothes and shoes, when he is ill he needs doctors and medicine for his cure, for shelter he needs a house and for its construction he needs craftsman and labourers, the growth of crops depends upon farmers, to grind the flour he requires a millstone and to cook it he needs a chef, to sew clothes he needs a tailor, for shoes he needs leather and to make them a skilled artisan. The preparation of medicine requires hundreds of people at every stage, to walk upon he needs land, to breathe he needs air, to quench his thirst he needs water, for heat he needs fire and similarly in a thousand other needs he requires the help and support of countless people. If one wishes to write even a letter one cannot do so without the help and aid of thousands. The pen, light and paper only reach us after going through many processes. The rays of the sun and moon, the changing of the days and nights and the movement of the stars have such an obvious effect on this universe and human life that they need no mentioning. And this need for help is not restricted to his lifetime! In death he requires the help of others to get him to the grave!

All of the above matters relate to the apparent aspects of life. If we explore this issue³⁴ in terms of hidden and esoteric matters we find an even greater system of mutual help and support. Take for example the soul's nourishment, for this there exists a distinct spiritual system upon which everyone is dependant, (for example) attaining the proximity and recognition (*marifa*) of Allah Ta'aala - the primary purpose of the human's existence -

³² An example of the misunderstanding some people have.

³³ In verse 3 of Surah Zumar, quoted later in the text.

³⁴ Of mutual need and help

is connected to the help of Prophets and Messengers. (Furthermore) Rules and commands pertaining to Ibaadah and other legal and religious matters cannot be derived without Divine revelation and Prophetic teachings.

If we were to explain each matter in detail we would have such a lengthy and wide ranging system of help and mutual co-operation that would be difficult to summarise. After all this to still consider seeking help from a *Ghair ullah* as *Kufr* and *Shirk* is laughable and unbelievable!

It is of course useless and spurious to seek benefit from that which does not have the ability to benefit e.g. seeking an antidote in poison; seeking water from fire or seeking knowledge from an ignorant is both illogical and non sensical. Similarly so is seeking something from one who has not been given that item by Allah Ta'aala. But it is also ignorance and folly to call such a person a *Kaafir* or *Mushrik* without proof³⁵.

In summary, seeking help from a *Ghair ullah* or believing it to be permissible will not be (or necessitate) *Kufr* or *Shirk* until one also believes the *Ghair ullah* is independent (sovereign) and possesses the personal power of effect and invention. And if help is sought whilst considering the helper simply the manifestation of Divine help and without the personal power of effect and invention it will not be *Kufr* or *Shirk*. Whether that person or thing has the power is a different matter. But it is absolutely wrong to denote that as *Kufr* or *Shirk*.

The reason for this is that if anyone is accepted as the *Mazhar* (expression) of Divine Help and there is no belief in him having divinity or any requisite attribute of divinity then his help and support will in reality be the help and support of Allah Ta'aala, which is the subject of *Iyyaaka Nasta'een*.

GLOSSARY

Awliya	Holy people who have reached the rank where they are termed 'Friends of Allah Ta'aala'
Deen	Religion. Way. Path
Fadeelah	Virtue, greatness, speciality
Fatwas	Religious edicts or rulings
Ghair ullah	Other than Allah. Traditionally used to denote beings in opposition to Allah, such as idols but recently increasingly used to denote everything other than Allah
Hasr	Exclusivity. Boundary. Restriction
Ibaadah	Worship
Istiaana	Help, aid
Kufr	Apostasy. Rejection of Islam. A belief that contradicts the principles of Islam.
Mushrik	Polytheist. One who undertakes <i>Shirk</i> .
Shirk	Polytheism. To consider anyone similar to Allah in terms of His Personal Being, His attributes or those matters necessary for divinity.
Saaliheen	Righteous people
Ummah	Nation, family. Collective word for all the Muslims
Waseela	A means or method of attaining something.

³⁵ Doing something useless and spurious does not mean it is *Shirk* or *Kufr*.

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