

A CURE FOR THE HEART

EPISODE 7: RECOGNISING THE FORMS
& DEPTHS OF SHIRK





VERSE ON TAQWA

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ
وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

*O humanity! Worship your Lord, Who
created you and those before you, so that
you may become mindful of Him.*

(Surah Al-Baqarah 2:21)

- There are various interpretations of the Arabic term "Taqwa". For instance, "تَتَّقُونَ" (tattaqoon) in this verse means **"to become taqwa,"** if we consider Taqwa as a verb rather than a noun.
- Taqwa stems from the root word meaning **"to protect ourselves of our Akhirah"** by being conscious of Allah SWT and obeying Him. Translations of Taqwa vary, with some conveying it as righteousness, and others as fear and protection.



THE FIRST COMMAND

- Kak Natasha selected this Ayah because it is the first command in the Quran, urging humanity to worship our Lord - **an all-encompassing command.**
- It is also interesting to note that Allah SWT addresses **“O humanity”**, implying that this directive **applies universally to ALL individuals**, calling upon us all to recognise Who our Rabb is.
- This is the fundamental message of the Quran. While many admit the existence of a Creator, only few would truly admit to this truth.
- For example, when faced with imminent danger, such as being on a plane about to crash, people often turn to belief in miracles and God. However, the challenge lies in embracing the aspect of worship in their lives.





JUST DO IT!

- People often express that **they are not yet ready for certain actions**, like wearing the Hijab or performing Hajj.
- Like many other Ayahs in the Quran, including the Ayah on Ramadan, Taqwa is the outcome. In a conversation with her Sheikh, she learned a profound truth: **there is no such thing as readiness, we just have to do it! We worship, then the piety will come!**
- The process doesn't work in reverse; we shouldn't wait until we feel pious to start to engage in acts of worship. Rather, **piety gradually develops within us through the very act of worshipping**. It's akin to saying, "I'll wait until I become a skilled builder before I start constructing my house." In reality, we must begin laying the foundation, regardless if we feel fully prepared or not.



aa plus

WORSHIP ALLAH ALONE

- In the following Ayah, Allah SWT Says,

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرْشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً
وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ
رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

'He is the One' Who has made the earth a place of settlement for you and the sky a canopy; and sends down rain from the sky, causing fruits to grow as a provision for you. So do not knowingly set up equals to Allah 'in worship'.

(Surah Al-Baqarah 2:22)

- This Ayah implies the importance of worshipping Allah SWT alone, as He is the Creator of all. We often need reminders, and one crucial reminder is that **Shirk can manifest in many subtle ways.**



- Sometimes we are conditioned to take Shirk lightly. However, **no form of Shirk is light.**

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ افْتَرَىٰ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا

Indeed, Allah does not forgive associating others with Him 'in worship', but forgives anything else of whoever He wills. And whoever associates others with Allah has indeed committed a grave sin.

(Surah An-Nisa 4:48)

- Hence, this matter holds significant weight, as Allah SWT explicitly states that while He forgives all sins, **Shirk is unforgivable without sincere repentance before death.**
- There's a misconception that worshipping other than Allah SWT involves acts like supplication or prostration. However, this stems from a shallow understanding of what constitutes worship.

FORMS OF SHIRK

- **To love, fear, and obey are all forms of worship.** So, equating something or someone with Allah SWT, and prioritising obedience to another authority over Allah SWT is a form of Shirk.
- A common scenario: Individuals skip prayer in fear of being late to a meeting, fear of leaving the meeting, or due to pressing deadlines. This exemplifies placing something or someone above Allah SWT.
- Another example of Shirk is when we allow fear of others to silence us from speaking out. Additionally, adopting superstitions or cultural expressions, such as saying "touchwood," "fingers crossed," or participating in rituals like tossing Yee Sang.





- Deep down, individuals engaging in such practices know that touching wood or chanting during Yee Sang holds no real benefit. Yet, they do these customs simply to fit in.
- Many of us fail to grasp the gravity of our actions, particularly in matters as significant as Shirk, we must be vigilant, cautious and prudent about it.
- At times, we've normalised behaviours that may seem insignificant but it is borderline Shirk. For instance, Morocco is a predominantly Muslim country, and Halloween and Christmas decorations are displayed in an attempt to fit in.
- However, we must ponder: **To what extent are people trying to fit in, and at what expense?**

Point of Reflection:

Are we
sacrificing our
own religion
to fit in?



THE STRANGE ONES

- Many aspects of our lives have become normalised, yet it's crucial to remember the Hadith where Rasulullah ﷺ mentioned:

It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

“Islam began as something strange and will go back to being strange, so glad tidings to the strangers.”

(Sunan Ibn Majah)



- Sometimes, when we adhere to Islamic principles, it may lead others to perceive us as strange or overly strict. However, **these rules are ordained by Islam for our benefit.**
- On certain matters, there is some tolerance under certain circumstances.

- However, the severity of Shirk is well defined —**it stands as the biggest sin**. Why would one willingly engage in an act that Allah SWT has explicitly stated He will not forgive in the Akhirah?

وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

It has already been revealed to you—and to those 'prophets' before you—that if you associate others 'with Allah', your deeds will certainly be void and you will truly be one of the losers. (Surah Az-Zumar 39:65)

- The consequence of Shirk as mentioned in Surah Az-Zumar, is that **all our deeds will be void**. Is engaging in Shirk even worth the risk?



We can't
pick and
choose in
religion.





NAVIGATING CREATIVELY



- **We need to be creative in our compromises.** For example, while we refrain from saying "Merry Christmas" to avoid endorsing a celebration contrary to our beliefs, we can offer alternative, harmless greetings like "Happy Holidays" or "Have a good break."
- And if there's a necessity to participate in tossing Yee Sang, we can graciously say, *"I'm praying for prosperity, but my prayers are directed to God."*
- Add a touch of humour and convey the message with a smile! Instead of outright refusal, it's essential to maintain grace in our actions. We don't need to criticise others; instead, it is only required of us to demonstrate our stance - assert our right to our beliefs without needing to condemn others.

THE BLURRED LINES

- **It's also crucial to recognise how subtly and sneakily Shirk infiltrates various forms of entertainment, including music, movies, and even fictional books.**
- **There has been a rise in movies featuring demon-based characters where these entities are portrayed as heroes, blurring the lines between good and evil.**
- **It's easy to brush off such content as mere entertainment, but it subtly feeds into our subconscious.**





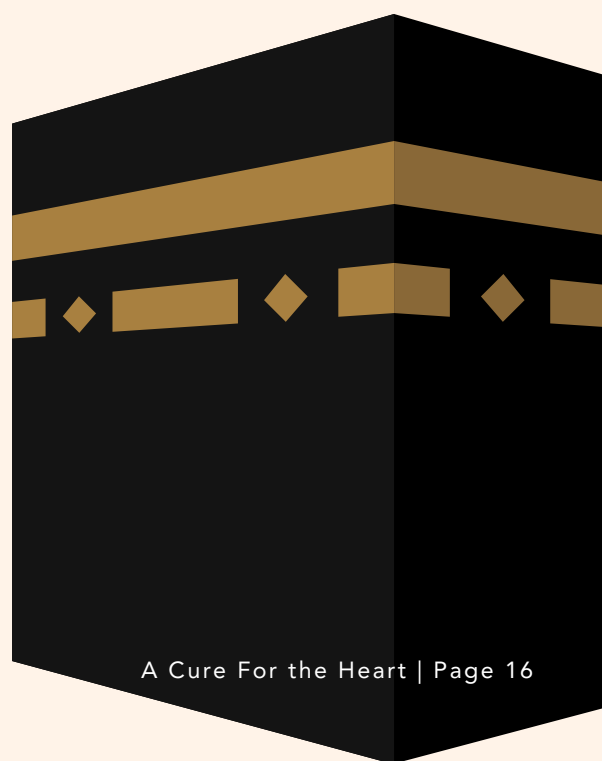
LEGISLATING AGAINST ALLAH

- Another way in which we commit Shirk, and this is one of Allah SWT's criticisms of Bani Israel, is **when we accept legislation that Allah does not ordain, or that contradicts His legislations.**
- **Only Allah has the ultimate right to legislate**, while humans can enact laws that align with Allah's legislation. For example, while Allah SWT did not specify traffic laws, we need to implement them to ensure safety.
- When we declare certain legislation from Allah as inferior and feel compelled to impose secular laws and values—for instance, by legitimising homosexuality—we are essentially committing a form of Shirk. This is because we are asserting that Allah's legislation is imperfect.



DISGUISED SHIRKS

- Shirk extends beyond mere acts of worship (i.e. not seeking a Bomoh or abstaining from black magic). Sometimes, Shirk **manifests through our arrogance or the content we consume. Shirk can also disguise themselves as religious practices among those who lack knowledge.**
- Kak Natasha recounted an encounter where individuals sold pieces of black velvet, allegedly from the Kiswah—the black covering of the Kaaba. Even if these claims were true, many buyers would hang these pieces in their homes and direct their Duas towards them.
- Similarly, hanging a miniature Quran in the car believing it serves as a talisman for protection. It's important to recognise that objects do not possess the power to protect us; rather, Allah SWT Alone provides protection.





May Allah SWT
protect us, give
us sharper
understanding,
strengthen our
Aqeedah and
forgive us for
what we don't
know.



Al-Buhuti reported: Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, said,

“O Allah, show me the truth as truth and guide me to follow it.

Show me the false as false and guide me to avoid it.”



HEART WORK

ACTION:

Reflect on practices in your life that may involve elements of Shirk and plan how to remove them completely from your life.

REFLECTION:

How is your attitude towards normalised practices that may contain subtle Shirk? Do you feel uncomfortable or are you used to the normalisation?

CONTRIBUTION:

If you notice a loved one indulging in Shirk practices, suggest to them alternatives that are aligned with the religion.