

Refraining from idolatry

Very briefly, idolatry is associating other beings with Allah. Seeing this definition, some people may raise the objection, "We already do not associate a partner with Allah," although it may actually be the case that they do. Their failure to grasp the meaning of idolatry accounts for such an objection. Indeed, the Qur'an relates the case of many people who associate partners with Allah—that is, who are idolaters—yet who never accept this situation:

On the Day We gather them all together, We will say to those who associated others with Allah, "Where are the partner-deities, for whom you made such claims?" Then they will have no recourse except to say, "By Allah, our Lord, We were not idolaters." (Surat al-An'am: 22-23)

No one must take it for granted that he is totally free from idolatry, but must always pray Allah to keep him from it. That is because idolatry is a great sin. When the Prophet (saas) was asked what the greatest sin was, he answered "*To associate partners with Allah, while He has created you.*" In the Qur'an, Allah states that He may forgive all sins and crimes, except for idolatry:

Allah does not forgive anything being associated with Him, but He forgives whoever He wills for anything other than that. Anyone who associates something with Allah has committed a terrible crime. (Surat an-Nisa': 48)

The initial point of idolatry, which is such a great "sin and slander," is ascribing the attributes of Allah to some other being in one's mind. The fact, however, is that, the attributes (power, intelligence, beauty and so on) which we ascribe to other beings do not actually belong to them; they are endowed with them by Allah for a temporary and specified period of time. Assuming these attributes to "belong" to beings other than Allah simply means taking them as deities. This, in turn, is defined as associating the beings in question as partners with Allah, in other words, setting up partners with Allah.

Regarding Allah's oneness and uniqueness, the Qur'an says the following:

Say: "He is Allah, Absolute Oneness, Allah, the Everlasting Sustainer of all. He has not given birth and was not born. And no one is comparable to Him." (Surat al-Ikhlās: 1-4)

As stated in the verse above, Allah is the Provider of everyone; every being is in need of Him to exist. Nothing equals Him. Once this fact is denied and people start thinking that some beings can exist of their own accord without Allah's sustenance, idolatry surfaces. With such a mindset, one forgets that every living thing is under the control of Allah. A false belief about the existence of some beings who do not need Allah emerges. The assumption that such beings can exist leads man to ask them for help, seek their consent and adopt their rules.



However, believers who do not associate partners with Allah turn towards only Him since they know that Allah has power over all things. The rationale of believers is stated in the Qur'an as follows:

You alone we worship. You alone we ask for help. (Surat al-Fatiha: 4)

Those who associate partners with Allah in fact turn towards beings that are not capable of helping them. That is because the beings they take as deities are also feeble servants like themselves. Of this Allah states the following:

Do they make things into partner-deities which cannot create anything and are themselves created; which are not capable of helping them and cannot even help themselves? If you call them to the right path, they will not follow you. It makes no difference if you call them or stay silent. Those you call on besides Allah are servants just like yourselves. Call on them and let them respond to you if you are telling the truth. (Surat al-A'raf: 191-194)

Consequently, idolatry is a great slander, a great deception and a very unwise attitude. The unwise conduct of those who associate partners with Allah is described in the Qur'an as follows:

Mankind! An example has been made, so listen to it carefully. Those whom you call upon besides Allah are not even able to create a single fly, even if they were to join together to do it. And if a fly

steals something from them, they cannot get it back. How feeble are both the seeker and the sought! They do not measure Allah with His true measure. Allah is All-Strong, Almighty. (Surat al-Hajj: 73-74)

Idolatry appears in different forms. Since people take beings other than Allah as deities, they seek their approval. People pin their hopes on these deities and accept their judgements as true. This is how a man becomes subservient to millions of imaginary deities. He hopes to find relief in these beings, who are as impotent as himself. However, one who associates partners with Allah is at an impasse and his loss is, therefore, very great. This fact is related in the Qur'an as follows:

... Associating others with Him is a terrible wrong. (Surah Luqman: 13)

Yet it must be said that such a man wrongs himself. **That is because "Allah does not wrong people in any way; rather it is people who wrong themselves."** (Surah Yunus: 44).

<https://www.harunyahya.info/en/articles/refraining-from-idolatry>