

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Shirk, Jahiliyyah & Khurafat

The gravest sin in Islam, the age it grew out of, and the superstitions — old and new — that still echo it. What each one is, real examples, and what to do about it. Every claim honestly graded.

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SHIRK, JAHILIYYAH & KHURAFAT

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Every hadith's grading is named honestly, including weak (da'if) and single-chain (gharib) narrations — because widely repeated doesn't mean sahih. This guide is educational, not a substitute for qualified scholarly guidance. Questions? Ask at deen2u.com/ask/.

CHAPTER 01

Shirk & Khurafat, side by side

Shirk (شرك)

Definition: Associating partners with Allah — directing worship, ultimate reliance, or belief in independent power over harm/benefit to anyone or anything besides Him.

Example: Praying to, or sacrificing for, a grave or spirit rather than Allah; believing a fortune-teller's claim about the unseen.

Punishment: Major shirk removes a person from Islam if held with conviction; unforgiven if unrepented at death (Quran 4:48, 5:72). Minor shirk (e.g. *riya*) doesn't remove a person from Islam, but is the sin the Prophet ﷺ feared most for his own companions.

Khurafat (خرافات)

Definition: Baseless superstition — beliefs and practices that credit an object, ritual, or omen with power that belongs to Allah alone. The living continuation of jahiliyyah's *tiyarah*.

Punishment: No fixed worldly punishment — severity depends entirely on what's believed. Trusting an object as an *independent* source of power is major shirk; a bad-luck habit without that conviction is minor shirk or a lesser sin.

How to repent (both): Stop the act, feel genuine regret, resolve never to return, and — for major shirk — renew the *shahada* sincerely.

CHAPTER 02

What is Shirk?

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ ۚ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ

"Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills."

Quran 4:48 · near-identical wording at 4:116

Shirk strikes at the one thing every other act of worship depends on: that it be directed to Allah alone. Tawhid is the foundation the entire religion is built on; shirk is the one crack that can bring the whole structure down.

When Abdullah ibn Mas'ud asked the Prophet ﷺ which sin is greatest in the sight of Allah, the answer began — before murder, before adultery — with shirk: "That you set up a rival unto Allah though He alone created you" (Sahih al-Bukhari 4477). The word is telling: a nidd, a rival — anything given the reliance, hope, fear, or devotion that belongs to the One who made you. And notice the reasoning built into the answer itself: though He alone created you. Shirk isn't only forbidden; it's incoherent — thanking, fearing, or petitioning something that never created anything, while the One who created everything goes unasked.

Major shirk vs. minor shirk

Shirk Akbar (major): worshipping something besides Allah; believing another being shares His power to independently harm or benefit. Takes a person outside Islam if held with conviction.

Shirk Asghar (minor): doesn't remove a person from Islam, but is still actively warned against. The clearest example: *riya* — doing an act of worship to be seen or praised.

"Riya (showing off)" — named by the Prophet ﷺ as the minor shirk he feared most for his companions.

Musnad Ahmad, via Mahmud ibn Labid HASAN

What shirk looks like in practice

Worship redirected to a grave, saint, or spirit; calling on the dead for needs only Allah controls; trusting an object's own power (amulets); consulting fortune-tellers about the unseen; extreme obedience or love given the total devotion owed only to Allah; *riya* in worship.

CHAPTER 03

The three foundations of Tawheed

Scholars organize Tawhid into three foundations. Shirk isn't one uniform error — it's a violation of one or more of these, and seeing which one is broken separates the mushrikeen's own confused position from complete Tawhid.

1. Tawheed ar-Rububiyyah — Lordship

Affirming Allah alone as Creator, Sustainer, and Controller of all existence. Even Makkah's pagans affirmed this: asked who created the heavens and earth, "they would surely say, 'Allah!'" (Quran 31:25). Affirming Rububiyyah alone does not make someone a believer.

2. Tawheed al-Uluhiyyah — Worship

Directing every act of worship — prayer, sacrifice, vows, ultimate reliance — to Allah alone. This is exactly where the mushrikeen broke: they worshipped idols "only that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position" (Quran 39:3) — intermediaries they believed carried their worship upward. This is the specific point the shahada addresses.

3. Tawheed al-Asma was-Sifat — Names & Attributes

Affirming Allah's own names and attributes exactly as He described them — without distortion, denial, asking "how," or likening to creation. "There is nothing like unto Him" (42:11); "To Allah belong the best names, so call on Him by them" (7:180).

Nearly every example in this guide traces back to a violation of Uluhiyyah specifically — worship or reliance directed somewhere other than Allah, by someone who may well affirm Rububiyyah without any difficulty at all.

CHAPTER 04

Consequence & repentance

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ

"Indeed, he who associates others with Allah — Allah has forbidden him Paradise, and his refuge is the Fire."

Quran 5:72

Allah forgives every sin He wills except shirk that a person carries, unrepented, to their death. Someone who commits shirk and sincerely repents while alive is not held to this warning — repentance is exactly what changes the outcome.

The warning has an exact mirror, and the texts state both sides together. "Whoever dies while still invoking anything other than Allah as a rival to Allah will enter Hell" — and, as Ibn Mas'ud completed it, whoever dies invoking no rival to Allah enters Paradise (Sahih al-Bukhari 4497). Jabir narrates the same pairing directly from the Prophet ﷺ. "He who dies without associating anyone with Allah would enter Paradise," and he who dies associating anything with Him enters the Fire (Sahih Muslim 93a). The decisive question, in the end, is what a person is carrying at death — which is exactly why repentance, open until then, matters so much.

How to repent

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا تَوْبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا

"O you who have believed, repent to Allah with sincere repentance."

Quran 66:8

- 1. Stop the act.** No repentance is sincere while the act continues.
- 2. Feel genuine regret.** Real remorse, not just embarrassment.
- 3. Resolve never to return.** A firm intention going forward.
- 4. Renew the shahada, sincerely.** For major shirk, affirm *la ilaha illallah* anew.

CHAPTER 05

Jahiliyyah — the age Islam interrupted

Jahiliyyah (الجاهلية) — "the age of ignorance" — describes pre-Islamic Arabia: not ignorance of facts, but of guidance. Shirk was its default. By the Prophet's ﷺ time, the Kaaba itself had filled with **360 idols**.

At the Conquest of Makkah, the Prophet ﷺ struck the 360 idols around the Kaaba, saying: "Truth has come and falsehood has vanished."

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Sahih al-Bukhari 4287 SAHIH

Then vs. now — what Islam changed

Female infanticide → condemned directly (Quran 16:58–59, 81:8–9). **Endless blood-feuds** → abolished at the Farewell Sermon (Ibn Majah 3055, hasan). **Riba (usury)** → abolished in the same sermon — "you will have your capital" (Ibn Majah 3055, hasan). **No fixed rights for women** → fixed inheritance, consent in marriage established as law. **Tiyarah (omens)** → nullified (see Khurafat, next). **Idolatry at the Kaaba** → removed by hand, 630 CE.

Jahiliyyah is a historical period — but the Quran and hadith use the word beyond it too, as a standing warning: any time belief, law, or custom is built without submission to Allah's guidance, the same underlying pattern can return, in new clothes.

CHAPTER 06

Khurafat — superstition, then and now

لَا عَذْوَى وَلَا طَيْرَةٌ

"No 'adwa [contagion apart from Allah's will], nor tiyarah [superstitious omens] — but I like the good omen, the good word."

Narrated by Anas ibn Malik, Sahih al-Bukhari 5756 SAHIH

Fortune-telling

Visiting a fortune-teller costs forty nights of accepted prayer (Sahih Muslim 2230a, sahih). *Believing* one is graded more severely — disbelief in what was revealed (Ibn Majah 639/Tirmidhi 135, hasan) — because it treats a human as having access to al-ghayb, the unseen, reserved for Allah alone (Quran 27:65). Horoscopes, zodiac readings, and psychics fall under this same ruling today.

Amulets and charms — an honest complication

"Ruqyah [invoking other than Allah], amulets, and tiwalah [love-charms] are shirk."

Via Zainab from Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, Sunan Abi Dawud 3883 SAHIH · the chain Ibn Majah records (3530) is da'if

This hadith is authentic through its stronger route — Sunan Abi Dawud 3883, graded sahih by al-Albani — though the chain Ibn Majah records (3530) is graded da'if by Darussalam. Together

with the sahih no-tiyarah principle and Quran 10:107's insistence that harm and benefit belong to Allah alone, the case against trusting an object's own power stands on authentic grounds.

CHAPTER 07

Cultural khurafat practiced today

Spanning globally common practices, ones specific to Malay-Indonesian folk custom, and modern digital forms. The common thread: crediting an object, person, or ritual with power that belongs to Allah alone.

PROTECTIVE CHARMS & AMULETS

Azimat, jimat & tangkal

Objects worn believing they personally ward off harm.

"Evil eye" jewelry

Worn believing the object itself deflects harm.

Red string bracelets

Tied on for luck, credited with independent power.

Rabbit's foot & horseshoes

Kept believing the object brings luck.

Crystals for "energy"

Believed to channel protective power.

Dreamcatchers

Believed to filter or block bad dreams.

FORTUNE-TELLING & DIVINATION

Horoscopes & zodiac

Believed to predict or influence the day.

Tarot & palm reading

Consulted for insight into the unseen (27:65).

Psychics & fortune apps

Same ruling applies regardless of format.

Numerology

Name/birthdate value governing fate.

Feng shui for "luck"

Arranging objects to attract fortune.

FOLK HEALERS & MAGIC PRACTITIONERS

Bomoh, pawang & dukun

Consulted to reverse a curse via non-Quranic ritual.

Susuk

Objects believed magically inserted for beauty.

Santau & sent magic

Illness blamed on another's magic.

"Spiritual" healers

Claiming supernatural knowledge outside ruqyah.

EVERYDAY OMENS & SUPERSTITIONS

Black cats, broken mirrors

Treated as governing what follows.

Friday the 13th / unlucky numbers

Dates/numbers avoided as inherently unlucky.

Knocking on wood

Small rituals believed to change outcomes.

Umbrellas indoors, spilled salt

Treated as omens needing a counter-ritual.

Astrology-timed weddings

Dates chosen by non-Islamic "auspiciousness."

REVERENCE OF OBJECTS, GRAVES & HEIRLOOMS

Keris & pusaka heirlooms

Believed to carry their own supernatural power.

Offerings at "keramat" sites

Left for spirits, rather than sunnah grave visits.

Asking the deceased for needs

Crosses into major shirk — see Visiting Graves.

Spirit-appeasement rituals

Offerings to pacify a place-spirit or ancestor.

MODERN & DIGITAL KHURAFAT

"Manifestation" & law-of-attraction

Belief alone bends outcomes, apart from Allah's decree.

Chain messages & "share or bad luck"

Tiyarah in a new format.

Lucky wallpapers & app charms

Digital talismans trusted like a physical amulet.

Astrology & horoscope apps

Same fortune-telling ruling, as a push notification.

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رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

"Our Lord, accept this from us. Indeed You are the Hearing, the Knowing." (Quran 2:127)