

## Is Istighatha (invoking other than Allah) considered Shirk (Part 1)?

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It is very popular among the Twelver Shia masses to call upon (supplicate to or invoke) the Prophet (s) and especially the Aimmah (as) without realizing how anti-Quranic this practice is. It can also be considered a kind of Shirk (association with Allah), as we shall establish through the Quran and the Narrations of Ahlulbayt (as) in this two-part series. This article will cover the Quranic evidences, and [this second article](#) will cover the narrations and scholarly opinions.

[This earlier article](#) goes over the difference between the Quranic concept of Waseela/Tawassul (seeking means of nearness to Allah) versus Istighatha (where entities others than Allah are “invoked”).

### What does Allah (swt) say about Shirk in the Quran?

Let's see what the Quran says about “**Shirk**”.

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

*Indeed, Allah does not forgive association (Shirk) with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin. (Quran, 4:48)*

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا

Indeed, **Allah does not forgive association (Shirk) with Him**, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And he who associates others with Allah has certainly gone far astray. (4:116)

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

(Quran, 4:48, 4:116)

Allah (swt) Himself is Stating that **He Will forgive any sin except for Shirk.**

In Surah An'aam 83-88 , Allah (swt) mentions 18 of his noble Prophets (as) and say that even if they committed shirk, all their good deeds would be wiped off.

وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ ۚ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّن نَّشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ

And that was Our [conclusive] argument which We gave Abraham against his people. We raise by degrees whom We will. Indeed, your Lord is Wise and Knowing.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۗ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا ۗ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ ۚ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ ۗ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And We gave to Abraham, **Isaac and Jacob** – all [of them] We guided. And **Noah**, We guided before; and among his descendants, **David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron**. Thus do We reward the doers of good.

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَإِيلَاسَ ۚ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

And Zechariah and John and Jesus and Elias – and all were of the righteous.

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا ۗ وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ

And Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot – and all [of them] We preferred over the worlds.

وَمِنْ ءَابَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ<sup>ط</sup> وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

And [some] among their fathers and their descendants and their brothers – and We chose them and We guided them to a straight path.

ذَٰلِكَ هُدَىٰ ٱللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ ٱلْمَن يَشَآءُ مِن عِبَادِهِ ۗ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبِطَ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

That is the guidance of Allah by which He guides whomever He wills of His servants. **But if they had associated others with Allah, then worthless for them would be whatever they were doing.** (Quran, 6:83-88)

From this we see that Shirk is such a serious crime that Allah (swt) would have nullified the deeds of 18 of his noble Prophets (as) IF they had committed Shirk. Therefore, we should be extra cautious that we don't fall into this sin, **and since this sin can nullify all other good deeds, Shaitan puts all his efforts into causing people to fall into this sin.**

*...But if they had associated others with Allah, then worthless for them would be whatever they were doing.*

Allah says of his beloved prophets in Quran, 6:83-88.

**CLAIM: WE CALL UNTO THE PROPHET (S) AND THE AIMMAH (AS) BECAUSE ALLAH (SWT) HAS ALLOWED THEM TO HEAR AND RESPOND TO US.**

Let us study this claim with two pertinent questions:

**Question 1:** If we call upon the Imams (as), irrespective of whether we consider them dependent or independent, it would imply that we believe that the Imams (as) listen to us. If, at the same time, thousands of people in different parts of the world call upon the Imams (as), we therefore believe that the Imams (as) listen to everyone at the same time. This would mean that we consider

the Imams (as) “**All hearing**”, which is an exclusive characteristic of Allah (swt) as has been mentioned repeatedly in the Quran.

In the supplications of Ahlulbayt (as) they address Allah (swt) in these words, Imam Ali (as) says

يَا مَنْ لَا يَشْغَلُهُ سَمْعٌ عَنْ سَمْعٍ, يَا مَنْ لَا يَغْلُظُهُ السَّائِلُونَ

*O the one Whose hearing of one side does not restrict Him to hear the other side and those who question Him do not put him in fallacy.....*

**If the Imam (as) himself has the same quality, why would he praise Allah (swt) with a quality which is not specific to Allah (swt), rather it is found in his creation too?**

So the first Question to ponder upon is, do the Prophet(s) and the Imams (as) even hear us? And if we believe that they do hear us, isn't this “shirk” in the “sifaat” (Attributes) of Allah (swt)?

**We challenge** anyone to bring one “Sahih” (authentic) hadith or verse of Quran, which proves that Rasulallah (s) or the Imams (as) can hear us after their passing from the earthly realm.

**Question 2:** Has Allah (swt) given the Imams (as) the authority to provide us safety, help, give us children, or sustenance etc?

**Again we challenge** anyone to bring one “Sahih” (authentic) hadith or verse of Quran, which proves that Rasulallah (s) or the Imams (as) have been bestowed with such authority and power by Allah (swt). We will in fact present, in other articles, how the Aimmah (as) categorically declined any such powers.

## **CLEAR VERSES OF THE QURAN ABOUT NOT CALLING UPON OTHER THAN ALLAH (SWT):**

Before we proceed in the discussion and quote some verses from the Quran, it will only be fair that we inform the readers that the majority of the mainstream scholars are not ignorant about these verses, **rather they try to refute most of these verses by saying that these verse are only addressed to the mushrikeen (polytheists) of Mecca and these verses only prohibit the**

**calling upon of Idols, therefore we cannot use these verses as a proof against calling upon the Prophet (s) and Imams (as).**

We will inshallah examine this claim, and see if the verses really talk about only the idols or they give us general principles that applies to all, including the believers.

We will go in an order, starting from the first surah.

### **Verse 1: Surah Fatiha, 1:5**

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

***You (Alone) we worship, and you (Alone) we ask for help (Quran, 1:5).***

Explaining “Taqdeem”: The meaning of this above statement could have been simply conveyed as “na’buduka wa nastaeenuk” which means “We worship you and we seek help from you”. But Allah uses a different format: He Taught us to say “Iyyaka Na’budu wa iyyaka nastaeen”, so what you observe here is that the second person pronoun (ka) has been brought before the verb (nabudu) instead of after it. This is called “Taqdeem” in Arabic, and it signifies “Iktisaas”, i.e. exclusivity. That is to say that the verse is saying: “**Only** you do we worship (O Allah) and **only** You do we seek help from”.

Allah (swt) asks us to repeat this sentence at least 10 times every day in our prayer, so that we may ponder over it.

One might say, “*well, surely we seek Allah (swt)’s help, but to seek His help, we call upon the Imams (as), so they can intermediate between us and Allah (swt) to transfer our request for help to Allah (swt).*”

But this statement is absurd, because just before the “asking for help” phrase, the verse also says “you (alone) we worship”, so can we now worship the Imams (as) instead of Allah (swt) and expect them to transfer our worship to Allah (swt) (like we do in our supplications)? No.

Islam teaches us to have a direct relationship with Allah (swt), and even for supplication, Allah (swt) never taught us the rule of “intermediaries” in the Quran, rather Allah (swt) says **“Call upon me, and I will respond to you” (Quran, 40:60)**. So if anyone wants Allah (swt)’s help, they should call upon Allah (swt) Himself, not anyone else.

As we can see, this verse has nothing to do with the idols, rather it is a general rule applicable to all. One might ask, *“does it mean we cannot seek help from the people around us either?”*

Well, this is not what “Dua’a” means. Asking each other for help in the physical world has been established by numerous examples of previous prophets (as) in the Quran and from the life of our Prophet (s) and Imams (as) too, but what is unacceptable is calling upon someone across the curtain of Ghayb (i.e. someone who is in a different realm of existence such as Barzakh), and that is something we have no proof for, nor did the Prophet (s) and Imams (as) ever do it, or teach us to do it in any of their authentic narrations.

*... what is unacceptable is calling upon someone across the curtain of Ghayb, as that is something we have no proof for, nor did the Prophet (s) and Imams (as) ever do it, or teach us to do it in any of their authentic narrations.*

**Verse 2: Surah Baqara, 2:107**

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

*Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and [that] you have not besides Allah any protector or any helper? (Quran, 2:107)*

The verse clearly says that we have NO Protector or helper other than Allah (swt), and that is why **the Prophet (s) and Imams (as) themselves used to supplicate to Allah (swt) excessively for protection and help.**

One might say, that “we also consider Allah (swt) as the ultimate helper and protector, but when we say things like “Ya Ali Madad” or “Ya Mola Abbas” etc, we call upon them considering them to be dependent on Allah (swt), and we seek their help based on the power that Allah (swt) has bestowed upon them.”

We challenge anyone, to bring “authentic” proof that Allah (swt) has given them this power to help us, and Allah (swt) or the Imams (as) have taught us to seek help in this way.

Even though the above point can never be proven, yet even if we assume that Allah (swt) indeed helps us through them, and they themselves don't have the authority to help us, then it would be like calling upon the angel of death not to take our soul and prolong our life, or calling upon angels for rain, since we know that Allah (swt) has appointed angels for these tasks. But this would be absurd, since the angel of death and the angel of rain only act when Allah (swt) orders them, so praying to them would be useless for us. **Would it be logical to approach the “Sabab” (cause) which is Allah (swt) or the means (who have no authority)?**

Based on this understanding, we come to know that even if we consider the Prophet (s) and Imams (as) as the means through which Allah (swt) helps us (though we have no proof for that), yet it would be illogical to ask them for help. After this understanding if anyone still calls upon the Imams (as) for help, then he/she would be proving from his/her action that they don't consider the Imams (as) to be dependent on Allah (swt) rather they consider them independent, and they only fool themselves and others when they claim that they consider the Imams (as) to be totally dependent on Allah (swt). And they would be like the ones being referred to in the following verse:

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَيْنَ شُرَكَائُكُمْ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ

*And the Day We will gather them all together; then We will say to those who associated others with Allah, “Where are your ‘partners’ that you used to claim [with Him]?”*

ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا وَاللَّهِ رَبَّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ

*Then there will be no [excuse upon] examination except they will say, “By Allah, our Lord, we were not those who associated.”*

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

*Look! How they lie against themselves! **But the (lie) which they invented will disappear from them.** (Quran, 6:21-24).*

### **Verse 3: Surah Ma'eda, 5:116**

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يٰعِيسَىٰ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمَّيَ إِلَهَيْنِ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ

*And when Allah will say: O Isa son of Marium! did you say to men, Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah... (Quran, 5:116)*

As far as the divinity of Jesus Christ is concerned, most Christians agree on it, and consider it to be part of their core beliefs. So it is understandable why Allah (swt), on the Day of Judgement, would ask Prophet Isa (as) as to whether he had any role in promoting the concept of his own divinity.

But why does Allah (swt) Include Bibi Maryam (as) in the question? In other words, why does Allah (swt) Ask Prophet Isa (as) if he ever taught the people that they must consider his mother as a “god” besides Allah? Did the Christians ever claim that the Virgin Mary was a “god” besides god? Did they ever worship her in a way in which god should only be worshipped?

Even when we look back at history, we don't find any solid or concrete evidence for the existence of Christian sect in history that openly declared that the Virgin Mary was a “God.” Then why is Allah (SWT) implicitly accusing the Christians of having made Mary into a “god” besides Allah?

This is a critical factor that has even been acknowledged by scholars of Tafseer such as Allama Tabatabaai in his Tafseerul Meezan, where he writes while commenting on 05:116:

*The first noteworthy point over here is that Allah (SWT) Doesn't Say that the Christians called Bibi Maryam (as) “god” or referred to her as a divine entity. Rather Allah (SWT) Uses the term “Ittikhaadhul ilaah” (to take as God or to treat as God). And as Allama rightfully points out “to take someone or treat someone as “god” is different from calling someone “god” or declaring someone to be “god.””*



This means that it is entirely possible for a person to take an entity as a “god” besides Allah or treat an entity as a “god” besides Allah even without calling that entity “god” openly and without even realizing that they may be doing so. In other words, there are certain things which are only reserved for Allah. If you take those things and associate them or ascribe them to other than Allah, then you have taken that entity as a “god”, even if you openly declare that you don’t consider that entity to be “god.”

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Allama Tabatabai in Tafsir al-Mizan on verse 4:116

Allama Tabatabaai mentions some of those things which are exclusively reserved for Allah, and he mentions: **دعاء و ثناء و استغاثة و استشفع** (supplication, glorification, seeking help, and seeking intercession), these things can only be done in front of Allah behind the curtain of Ghayb (i.e. there is no harm if human beings do these things among each other, as long as they are in the physical realm following the natural laws of cause and effect.)

An example of catholic supplication to Mary can be seen here, see how similar this supplication is to how some shia supplicate to the Imams (as) and to Bibi Fatimah (as).

*“O Mother of Perpetual Help, thou art the dispenser of all the goods which God grants to us miserable sinners, and for this reason, has He made thee so powerful, so rich, and so bountiful, that thou mayest help us in our misery. Thou art the advocate of the most wretched and abandoned sinners who have recourse to thee; come, then, to my help, dearest Mother, for I recommend myself to thee. In thy hands, I place my eternal salvation and to thee do I entrust my soul. Count me among*

*thy most devoted servants; take me under thy protection, and it is enough for me; for, if thou protect me, dear Mother, I fear nothing; not from my sins, because thou wilt obtain for me the pardon of them; nor from the devils, because thou art more powerful than all hell together; not even from Jesus, my Judge Himself, because, by one prayer from thee, He will be appeased. But one thing I fear; that, in the hour of temptation, I may neglect to call on thee, and thus perish miserably. Obtain for me then the pardon of my sins, love for Jesus, final perseverance, and the grace always to have recourse to thee, O Mother of Perpetual Help.” (3 Hail Mary’s). (<http://www.dailycatholic.org/perpetua.htm>)*

Read the above supplication carefully and see how the Christian consider Mary as being totally dependent on God, and believe that all the powers she has, have been granted to her by God, and only consider her as an intermediary to God. But since they have no proof that God indeed has given her all these powers, therefore Allah (swt) in the above verse considers this as “Shirk”.

Similarly, since we have absolutely no authentic proof that Bibi Fatemah (as) and the Imams (as) have been bestowed with these powers, therefore if we call upon them even after considering them totally dependent on Allah (swt), it may be considered “shirk” in the eyes of Allah (swt).

#### **Verse 4: Surah An’aam, 6:63-64**

قُلْ مَنْ يُجِيبُكُم مِّنْ ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَّئِنْ أَنجَبْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

Say, “Who rescues you from the darkness of the land and sea [when] you call upon Him imploring [aloud] and privately, ‘If He should save us from this [crisis], we will surely be among the thankful.”

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُجِيبُكُم مِّنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ تُمْتَأْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ

Say, “It is Allah who saves you from it and from every distress; then you [still] associate others with Him.” (Quran, 6:63-64)

This verse clearly says that it is only Allah (swt) who protects us from EVERY distress (karb). Otherwise Allah (swt) should have said, “Allah (swt), His prophet and the Imams after him protect you from every distress..”, but there is no such verse in the Quran.

This verse is also a refutation of the fabricated supplication

يا كاشف الكرب عن وجه أخيه الحسين عليه السلام إكشف كربى بحق أخيك الحسين عليه السلام

*O remover of distress (karb) from the face of your brother Hussain (as), remove my distress (karb) by the right of your brother Hussain (as).*

In this fabricated supplication, Allah (swt) is out of the picture, as dua is directed to Abbas (as) and the wasila is of Imam Hussain (as). But many will call this “wasila” too and try to defend with the argument of “dependent” and “independent”.

Anyway, the verses 6:63-64 clearly refute the claim of this supplication, as it says that the only one who can relieve you of your distress is Allah (swt) and not Hazrat Abbas (as).

#### **Verse 5: Surah An'aam, 6:71**

قُلْ أَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا وَنُرَدُّ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْنَا اللَّهُ كَالَّذِي اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْرَانًا لَهُ أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ أُنْتِنَا ۗ قُلْ إِنْ هُدَىٰ اللَّهُ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ ۗ وَأَمْرًا يُسَلِّمُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Say, **“Shall we call upon instead of Allah that which neither benefits us nor harms us and be turned back on our heels after Allah has guided us? [We would then be] like one whom the devils enticed [to wander] upon the earth confused, [while] he has companions inviting him to guidance, [calling], ‘Come to us.’ ”** Say, **“Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance; and we have been commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds. (Quran, 6:71)**

In reply to this verse, it is said that *“these verse are clearly addressed to the mushrikeen of Mecca, and instruct them not to invoke the idols, since the verse says ““Shall we invoke instead of Allah **that which neither benefits us nor harms.**”*

How can this apply for the Prophet (s) and the Imams (as)? How can you assume that the Prophet (saww) and Imams (as) cannot benefit or harm us?”

This argument can be easily refuted. In the Quran, Allah (swt) asks the Prophet (s) to tell the people:

قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا

**Say “Indeed, I do not possess for you [the power of] harm or good.” (Quran, 72:21)**

Not just others, the Prophet (saww) does not even have the power of benefit or harm over his own self, as can be seen in the verses of Quran. Allah (swt) says: Say (O Muhammad SAW):

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ

**I possess no power of benefit or harm for myself except as Allah wills. (Quran, 7:188 and 10:49)**

So how can it be that the Prophet cannot benefit us or harm us? What does it mean? Once again, from behind the curtain of Ghayb (i.e. human beings may harm or benefit each other, as long as they are in the physical realm following the natural laws of cause and effect). The Mushriken prayed to Idols, not because they thought them to be “independent of God”, but because they believed they could help them, or harm them, from behind the curtain of ghayb. Of course these Idols were not doing anything physical and natural to benefit or harm them. Their assumption was that the Idols could benefit them or harm from behind the curtain of Ghayb. But even the Prophet (s) cannot do that, as can be seen above from 72:21, 7:188 and 10:49.

So now that it's clear that the Prophet (s) and therefore the Imams (as) cannot benefit or harm us, therefore according to the verse “Shall we call upon instead of Allah that which neither benefits us nor harms us and be turned back on our heels after Allah has guided us? ...”, we cannot call upon the Prophet (s) and Imams (as).

### **Verse 6: Surah A'raf, 7:37-38**

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَنَالُهُمُ نَصِيبُهُم مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا يَنفُوفُونَهُمْ قَالُوا أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ ۗ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَيْنَا أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ

*And who is more unjust than one who invents about Allah a lie or denies His verses? Those will attain their portion of the decree until when Our messengers (Angels) come to them to take them in death, they will say, “Where are those you used to call upon besides Allah?” They will say, “They*

have departed from us,” **and will bear witness against themselves that they were disbelievers.**  
(Quran, 7:37)

Isn't it better that we realize the error of our ways, before we are made to realize after our death? And we find out that we had been erroneous in blindly following our forefathers and scholars while they won't be able to help us or take the burden of our sins on their shoulders, because this is what the next verse seems to suggest.

In the next verse the Quran says:

قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ فِي النَّارِ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَعْنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ادَّارَكُوا فِيهَا جَمِيعًا  
قَالَتْ أَخْرِضْنَاهُمْ لِرَبِّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ أَضَلُّونَا فَآتَاهُمُ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِّنَ النَّارِ قَالَ لِكُلِّ ضِعْفٌ وَلَكِن لَّا تَعْلَمُونَ

[Allah] will say, “Enter among nations which had passed on before you of jinn and mankind into the Fire.” Every time a nation enters, it will curse its sister until, when they have all overtaken one another therein, the last of them will say about the first of them “Our Lord, these had misled us, so give them a double punishment of the Fire. He will say, “For each is double, but you do not know.  
(Quran, 7:38)

It seems from this verse (and from many other verses of the Quran), **that most people will enter the fire of hell because of blind following, and when they meet those they had followed blindly, they would curse each other.** Those who had followed their forefathers and scholars blindly, would ask Allah (swt) to punish them (forefathers and scholars) double the punishment, but surprisingly, Allah (swt) will give double the punishment to both the groups. The followers will be punished because they did not use their intellect and followed their misguided forefathers and scholars blindly.

**Verse 7: Surah A'raf, 7:194**

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

**Verily those whom you call upon besides Allah are servants like unto you: Call upon them, and let them listen to your prayer, if you are (indeed) truthful!** (Quran, 7:194)

No doubt that this verse is referring to the Mushrikeen, but at the same time, Allah (swt) gives us a general principle, that if those we call upon are “Servants (of Allah) like us”, then we cannot call upon them. Because anyone who is a servant of Allah (swt) does not have the power to listen to everyone at the same time like Allah (swt), neither do they have the power to help us.

Isn't the Prophet (s) a servant of Allah (swt)? Yes he is, and we recite that in the Tashahud in every prayer.

*Verily those whom you call upon besides Allah are servants like unto you: Call upon them, and let them listen to your prayer, if you are (indeed) truthful! (Quran, 7:194)*

*Isn't the Prophet (s) a servant of Allah (swt)? Yes he is, and we recite that in the Tashahud in every prayer.*

**Verse 8: Surah Yunus, 10:66**

أَلَا إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَمَا يَتَّبِعُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ ۗ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

*Now, surely, whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's; and what do they pursue who call upon partners besides Allah?; they do not follow (anything) but conjectures, and they only make surmises (supposing something without evidence). (Quran, 10:66)*

In many places in the Quran, “Calling upon other than Allah (swt)” and “Shirk” have been associated with “Dhann (conjecture)” and “Iftirah on Allah (lying about Allah)”. This is because if a person sincerely follows what Allah (swt) reveals in his holy scriptures, no one would ever fall into the sin of shirk.

A person would only fall into “Shirk” if he puts his conviction on “Dhann”, and gives the attributes of Allah (swt) to His other servants. Without “Dhann” and without “lying about Allah (swt)” it's

impossible to do such a thing.

Shaheed Mutahhari in his paper **“Understanding the Uniqueness of the Quran”** says:

*“Among various sources of error mentioned by the Quran, one is that of taking conjecture (Dhann) and hypothesis for certainty and conviction. If a person were to adhere to the principle of putting conviction only in certainties and of not confusing between conjecture and certainties, he would not fall into error.”*

Then he quotes the verse of the Quran :

*(6:116): “If you obey the most part of those on earth, they will lead you astray from the path of God: they follow only surmise, merely conjecturing.”*

*(17:36): “And pursue not that you have no knowledge of.....”*

Quran also says about “dhann” (conjecture, assumption etc) in:

*(58:28): “...They follow nothing but “Dhann”, and indeed, “Dhann” avails not against the truth at all.*

*(10:36): “And most of them follow not except “Dhann”. Indeed “Dhann” avails not against the truth at all....”*

From this we come to know that Allah (swt) wants us to follow only certainties, and not Dhann, and He also warns us that most people follow Dhann and therefore are misguided.

This is the mistake many of today’s Twelver Shias have made. Taking as (unquestioned) certainties what is heard from the pulpit (mimbar) and what is read in fabricated narrations, even though a lot of it is “Dhann”. If we took our beliefs from the Quran and authentic narrations of Ahlulbayt (as) we would never fall into this error.

*Taking as (unquestioned) certainties what is heard from the pulpit (mimbar) and what is read in fabricated narrations, even though a lot of it is “Dhann”. If we took our beliefs from the Quran and*

## *authentic narrations of Ahlulbayt (as) we would never fall into this error.*

### **Verse 9: Surah Yunus, 10:106-107**

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ فَإِنْ فَعَلْتَ فَإِنَّكَ إِذًا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

***And do not call besides Allah on that which can neither benefit you nor harm you, for if you do then surely you will in that case be of the unjust.***

وَإِنْ يَمَسُّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يُرِدْكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَلَا رَادَّ لِفَضْلِهِ يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ  
الرَّحِيمُ

*And if Allah should afflict you with harm, then there is none to remove it but He; and if He intends good to you there is none to repel His grace; He brings it to whom He pleases of His servants; and He is the Forgiving, the Merciful. (Quran, 10:106-107)*

Clearly this verse prohibits us from calling upon anyone other than Allah (swt), and it also gives the reason that **“if Allah should afflict you with harm, then there is none to remove it but He; and if He intends good to you there is none to repel His grace; He brings it to whom He pleases of His servants”**.

Doesn't this reason apply to the Ahlulbayt (as) as well? If we invoke the Imams (as), can they remove any harm if Allah (swt) intends it?

### **Verse 10: Surah Ra'ad, 13:14**

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ إِلَّا كَبَسِطَ كَفَّيْهِ إِلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُغَ فَاهُ وَمَا هُوَ بِبَالِغِهِ وَمَا دَعَاءُ  
الْكُفْرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

*To Him [alone] is the true supplication. And those they call upon other than Him do not respond to them with a thing, except as one who stretches his hands toward water [from afar, calling it] to reach his mouth, but it will not reach it [thus]. And the supplication of the disbelievers is not but in error [i.e. futility]. (Quran, 13:12)*



Allah (swt) says “Those they call besides Him...”, now surely the Prophet (s) and Imams (as) come under “other than Allah” since we know that they are not Allah. This verse clearly prohibits us from calling upon them.

### Verse 11: Surah Nahl, 16:85-86

وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا الْعَذَابَ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

*And when those who wronged see the punishment, it will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved*

وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا شُرَكَاءَهُمْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ شُرَكَائُنَا الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِكَ فَأَلْقُوا إِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ إِنَّكُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ

*And when the ones who associated (others with Him) see their associates, they will say, “Our Lord, these are our associates whom we used to call upon apart from You.” They will then reply them the saying, “Surely you are liars indeed.” (Quran, 16:85-86)*

In this verse, those who were being called upon other than Allah (swt) have been called “Shuraka” of Allah (swt), i.e partners of Allah (swt). This indicated that calling upon anyone other than Allah (swt) is Shirk. It also seems from this verse that those we call upon other than Allah (swt) have no idea that we call upon them, since they cannot hear us, and that is why they reply by saying to those who used to call upon them “Surely you are liars indeed.”

### Verse 12: Surah Isra, 17:56-57

يَوْمَ يَدْعُوكُمْ فَتَسْتَجِيبُونَ بِحَمْدِهِ وَتَظُنُّونَ إِن لَّبِئْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

*Say, “Call upon those you have claimed besides Him, for they do not possess the [ability for] removal of adversity from you or [for its] transfer [to someone else].”*

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ وَيَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَهُ وَيَخَافُونَ عَذَابَهُ إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ كَانَ مَحْذُورًا

***Those whom they call upon [themselves] seek means of access to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared. (Quran, 17:56-57)***

This verse is clearly not about the idols of the mushrikeen. Since the verse says “Those whom they call upon, **[themselves] seek means of access to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment.**”

Again Allah (swt) is giving us a general principle, that if you call upon those who themselves seek means of nearness to Allah (swt) then, and hope for his mercy and fear his punishment, then “Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.”

Don't the Prophet (s) and Imams (as) fall into this category? Don't they themselves seek means of nearness to Allah (swt) by excessive salat, zakat, taqwa etc? And don't they hope for Allah (swt)'s mercy and fear his punishment? Surely, anyone who has read the lives of the Imams (as) and anyone who has read their supplications will know that they were indeed like that, rather they were at the peak of these traits.

Therefore they come under the category of entities this verse is implicitly forbidding us from calling upon.

***Those whom they call upon [themselves] seek means of access to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment.  
(Quran, 17:57)***

***Don't the Prophet (s) and Imams (as) fall into this category? Don't they themselves seek means of nearness to Allah (swt) by excessive salat, zakat, taqwa etc? And don't they hope for Allah (swt)'s mercy and fear his punishment?***

**Verse 13: Surah Naml, 27:59-62**

قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَىٰ ۗ **أَلَلَّهُ خَيْرٌ أَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ**

Say, [O Muhammad], “Praise be to Allah, and peace upon His servants whom He has chosen. **Is Allah better or what they associate with Him?**”

أَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ حَدَائِقَ ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ مَّا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُنْبِتُوا شَجَرَهَا ۗ **أَلَلَّهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ يَعْدِلُونَ**

Who is it that created the heavens and the earth and sent down for you rain from the sky, causing to grow thereby gardens of joyful beauty which you could not [otherwise] have grown the trees thereof? **Is there a deity with Allah? [No], but they are a people who ascribe equals [to Him].**

أَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَجَعَلَ خِلَالَهَا أَنْهَارًا وَجَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا ۗ **أَلَلَّهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ ۗ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ**

Who is it that made the earth a stable ground and placed within it rivers and made for it firmly set mountains and placed between the two seas a barrier? **Is there a deity with Allah? [No], but most of them do not know.**

أَمَّنْ يُجِيبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ إِذَا دَعَاهُ وَيَكْشِفُ السُّوءَ وَيَجْعَلُكُمْ خُلَفَاءَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ **أَلَلَّهُ مَعَ اللَّهِ ۗ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ**

**Who is it that responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with Allah? Little do you remember.**  
(Quran, 27:59-62)

In these verses, Allah (swt) mentions some characteristics which are specific to Allah (swt), like creation of heavens and earth, sending down rain from sky, causing the trees to grow, causing the rivers to flow, placing the mountains etc, and in the same list Allah (swt) mentions that characteristic of “responding to the desperate one when he calls for help and removing the evil...”, it clearly points to the fact that like the all other characteristics mentioned in this verse, **“responding to the call of the distressed” is also a characteristic specific to Allah (swt).**

#### Verse 14: Surah Ahzab, 33:17

قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَعْصِمُكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءًا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً ۗ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا

Say, “Who is it that can protect you from Allah if He intends for you an ill or intends for you a mercy?” **And they will not find for themselves besides Allah any protector or any helper.** (Quran, 33:17)

This is a very clear verse, since Allah (swt) is the ultimate cause of everything, and since he is the decision maker, then “Who is it that can protect you from Allah if He intends for you an ill or intends for you a mercy”. This verse again makes it clear, like many other verses, that we have no protector or helper other than Allah (swt), therefore we should only call upon him for help.

#### Verse 15: Surah Saba, 34:22

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۚ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْفَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ شِرْكٍَ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ ظَهِيرٍ

Say, [O Muhammad], “Call upon those you claim besides Allah.” **They do not possess an atom’s weight [of ability] in the heavens or on the earth, and they do not have therein any partnership [with Him], nor is there for Him from among them any assistant.** (Quran, 34:22)

#### Verse 16: Surah Fatir, 35:13-14

يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ

He causes the night to enter the day, and He causes the day to enter the night and has subjected the sun and the moon – each running [its course] for a specified term. That is Allah, your Lord; to Him belongs sovereignty. **And those whom you call upon other than Him do not possess [as much as] the membrane of a date seed.**

إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دُعَاءَكُمْ وَلَوْ سَمِعُوا مَا اسْتَجَابُوا لَكُمْ ۗ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ ۗ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ مِثْلُ خَبِيرٍ

***If you call upon them, they do not hear your supplication; and if they heard, they would not respond to you. And on the Day of Resurrection they will deny your association. And none can inform you like [one] Acquainted [with all matters]. (Quran, 35:13-14)***

Allah (swt) mentions three points about those who are called upon other than Him (swt).

1. They don't hear our supplication
2. Even if they could hear, they wouldn't respond
3. On the day of resurrection they will deny our association

**Do we have any authentic proof that the Imams (as) hear our supplications? No**

**Even if they heard, do we have proof that they can respond to our supplication? No**

Then this verse has a message for us, that the Imams (as) will deny our association on the day of resurrection like they have warned us in many of their narrations, that they will dissociate from the “ghulat” (exaggerators) like the dissociation of Jesus from the Christians.

*Then this verse has a message for us, that the Imams (as) will deny our association on the day of resurrection like they have warned us in many of their narrations, that they will dissociate from the “ghulat” (exaggerators) like the dissociation of Jesus from the Christians.*

Referring to Quran 35:13-14

**Verse 17: Surah Fatir, 35:40**

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ شُرَكَاءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَمْ  
ءَاتَيْنَهُمْ كِتَابًا فَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِنْهُ ۚ بَلْ إِنَّ يَعْدُو الظَّالِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا غُرُورًا

Say, “Have you considered your ‘partners’ whom you call upon besides Allah? Show me what they have created from the earth, or have they partnership [with Him] in the

**heavens? Or have We given them a book so they are [standing] on evidence therefrom? [No], rather, the wrongdoers do not promise each other except delusion.” (Quran, 35:40)**

Allah (swt) again gives us some general principles. Those we call upon other than Allah (swt), like the Prophet (s) and Imams (as):

1. Have they created anything in the universe? No
2. Do they have partnership with Allah (swt)? No
3. Has Allah (swt) sent any book which allows us to call upon them? No

Then, **“the wrongdoers do not promise each other except delusion.”**

So anyone who teaches us to call upon the Imams (as) and promises us that they will respond because they have been empowered to do so by Allah (swt) – anyone who says something like this is only promising us a delusion according to this verse.

*So anyone who teaches us to call upon the Imams (as) and promises us that they will respond because they have been empowered to do so by Allah (swt) is only promising us a delusion according to Quran, 35:40.*

**Verse 18: Surah Zumar, 39:38**

وَلَيْنَ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كَاشِفَاتُ ضُرِّيهِ أَوْ أَرَادَنِيَ بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَتُ رَحْمَتِهِ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

And should you ask them, Who created the heavens and the earth? They would most certainly say: Allah. Say: **“Have you then considered that what you call upon besides Allah, would they, if Allah desire to afflict me with harm, be the removers of His harm, or (would they), if Allah desire to show me mercy, be the withholders of His mercy?” Say: “Allah is sufficient for me; on Him do the reliant rely.” (Quran, 39:38)**

**Verse 19: Surah Ahqaf, 46:4-5**

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ ۗ أَنْتَوْنِي بِكِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ هَذَا أَوْ أَنْزِلَ  
مِّنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

Say, [O Muhammad], **“Have you considered that which you call upon besides Allah? Show me what they have created of the earth; or did they have partnership in [creation of] the heavens? Bring me a scripture [revealed] before this or a [remaining] trace of knowledge, if you should be truthful.”**

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَن دُعَائِهِمْ غَافِلُونَ

**And who is more astray than he who calls upon besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection, and they, of their invocation, are unaware.** (Quran, 46:4-5)

Again Allah (swt) gives some characteristics, which if not fulfilled for an entity, then it's not permissible to call upon them.

1. Have they created anything?
2. Did they have partnership with Allah (swt)
3. Another valid reason to call upon someone other than Allah (swt) is would be if Allah (swt) himself asked us to call upon them in his scripture, since Allah (swt) says “Bring me a scripture [revealed] before this or a [remaining] trace of knowledge, if you should be truthful.”

If none of the above conditions are fulfilled, then Allah (swt) says **“who is more astray than he who calls upon besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection, and they, of their invocation, are unaware.”**

**And who is more astray than he who calls upon besides Allah those who will not respond to him until the Day of Resurrection, and they, of their invocation, are unaware.**

## Verse 20: Surah Jinn, 72:18

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

*And that the masjids are for Allah, so do not invoke with Allah anyone (Quran, 72:18)*

## Verse 21: Surah Jinn, 72:20

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُوا رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا

*Say, [O Muhammad], “I only call upon my Lord and do not associate with Him anyone.” (Quran, 72:20)*

In this verse again, “calling upon” and “shirk (association)” have been linked, which indicated that, calling upon anyone other than Allah (swt) is tantamount to Shirk.

With this, we conclude the discussion of the verses of the Quran which prove that calling upon anyone other than Allah (swt) is Shirk. Even though this should be more than enough, but since the words and actions of the Ahlulbayt (as) further explain the Quran, we will give some examples from the supplications and narrations of Ahlulbayt (as) in [Part 2](#).

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