

Chapter 42

Allāh, Most High, says,

“Do not, then, knowingly make others partner-gods with Allāh.”¹

In exegesis to this verse, ibn `Abbās said, ‘(Taking) partner-gods is to commit *shirk* which in turn is less discernable than the crawling of an ant across a black rock in the depth of the night. It is to say, “By Allāh and your life, O so-and-so,” or, “By my life.” It is to say, “Were it not for this dog, the thief would have pounced on us,” or, “Were it not for this duck, the thief would have entered!” It is the saying of a person to his colleague, “Whatever Allāh willed and you willed.” It is the saying of a person, “Were it not for Allāh and so-and-so;” do not add, “so-and-so.” These are all examples of *shirk*.’ It was recorded by ibn Abī Ḥātim.²

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb reports that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Whoever swears an oath by another besides Allāh has disbelieved or committed *shirk*.” It was recorded by Tirmidhī who said it was ḥasan and Ḥākim who said it was ṣaḥīḥ.³

Ibn Mas‘ūd said, ‘That I take a false oath by Allāh is more beloved to me than taking a truthful oath by other than Him.’⁴

Ḥudhayfah (RA) reports that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Do not say, ‘Whatever Allāh willed and so-and-so willed,’ rather say, ‘Whatever Allāh willed, then so-and-so willed.’” It was recorded by Abū Dāwūd with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād.⁵

It is reported that Ibrāhīm al-Nakha‘ī said, ‘It is reprehensible for a person to say, “I take refuge with Allāh and with you.” It is permissible to say, “with Allāh, then with you,” or, “were it not for Allāh, then you.” Do not say, “Were it not for Allāh and you.”’⁶

Issues:

1. Exegesis to the verse of *al-Baqarah* concerning partner-gods
2. The Companions (RA) explained a verse that was revealed concerning major *shirk* in a way that subsumed minor *shirk*.
3. Swearing an oath by others besides Allāh is *shirk*.
4. A person’s swearing an oath by other than Allāh truthfully is more severe than swearing a false oath.
5. The distinction between the *waw* and *thumma* in wording.

Commentary

The author, may Allāh have mercy on him, quotes the following verse:⁷

Allāh, Most High, says,

“Do not, then, knowingly make others partner-gods with Allāh.”

The word partner-god, *nidd*, means equal or peer. The meaning of appointing a partner-god is to direct an action of worship – or part of it – to another besides Allāh. This is the state of the idol-worshippers who believe that those they supplicate to and place their hope in will be able to procure benefit for them, repress (harm) from them, and intercede on their behalf.

The verse quoted occurs in the following context,

“Mankind! Worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, so that hopefully you will have *taqwā*. It is He who made the earth a couch for you, and the sky a dome. He sends down water from the sky and by it brings forth fruits for your provision. Do not, then, knowingly make others partner-gods with Allāh.”⁸

In his exegesis to this verse, al-`Imād ibn Kathīr, may Allāh have mercy on him, said,

Abū`l-`Āliyah said concerning, “***Do not, then, knowingly make others partner-gods with Allāh,***” i.e. ‘co-equals and partners.’ The same was stated by al-Rabī` ibn Anas, Qatādah, Suddī, Abū Mālik, and Ismā`il ibn Abū Khālid. In his commentary to the same verse, ibn `Abbās said, ‘Do not associate any partner-god with Allāh, such as can procure no benefit or repress (no harm) while you know that He is your Lord. You have no lord besides Him who provides for you, and you know that the *Tawhīd* that his Messenger calls you to is the very truth containing no shadow of doubt.’ The same was stated by Qatādah.

Qatādah and Mujāhid said in commentary to this verse, ‘Equals amongst men who you obey in disobedience to Allāh.’ Ibn Zayd said that ‘partner-gods’ were gods that they had appointed alongside Him, granting them the same due as they did Him. Ibn `Abbās said that ‘partner-gods’ meant analogues.

In commentary to the verse, “***Do not, then, knowingly make others partner-gods with Allāh,***” Mujāhid said, ‘You know full well that He is One God as stated in the Tawrah and the Injīl.’

He then mentioned a ḥadīth conveying the same meaning as the noble verse, the ḥadīth is recorded in the Musnad of Aḥmad on the authority of al-Ḥārith al-Ash`arī that the Prophet of Allāh ﷺ said, “Allāh ordered Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyya with five injunctions: that he enact them and enjoin the Children of Israel to enact them, however he procrastinated. `Īsā (AS) said, ‘Allāh has ordered you with five injunctions: to enact them and to enjoin the Children of Israel to enact them. Now either you convey them, or I will convey them.’ He said, ‘My brother, were you to precede me in this, I fear that I would be punished or the earth would swallow me up.’ So Yaḥyā ibn Zakariyya gathered the Children of Israel together at Bayt al-Maqdis until the Mosque was overflowing and people were forced to sit on mounds and embankments. He praised Allāh, eulogised Him, and then said, ‘Allāh has ordered me with five injunctions: that I enact them and order you to enact them. The first is that you must worship Allāh and not associate anything with him. The example of this is that of a person who bought a slave with his most precious wealth: with gold or silver, and then that slave worked for him but gave the proceeds to someone else. Who amongst you would like to have such a slave? Allāh has created and you and provided for you, so worship Him and do not associate anything with Him. I enjoin you to the prayer for Allāh sets His face to the face of His servant so long as he does not turn away, so when you pray, do not look here and there. I enjoin you to fasting; the example of this is like a person has a sack of musk standing amongst a group of people, all of whom can smell its fragrance. The odour emitting from the mouth of a person fasting is better with Allāh than the scent of musk. I enjoin you to charity; the example of this is that of a person who was captured by the enemy, they bound his hands to his neck and prepared to decapitate him. He said, “Is there anyway I can ransom myself from you?” He then starting paying a ransom of every thing small and large he possessed until he set himself free. I enjoin you to remember Allāh copiously, the example of this is that of a man whose enemy is tirelessly pursuing him, he came across an impenetrable fortress and took refuge therein. The most fortified a servant can be against Shayṭān is when he is remembering Allāh.” The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ then said, “And I order you with five injunctions that Allāh ordered me with: the Jamā`ah, hearing, obeying, migration, and Jihād in the Way of Allāh. Whoever parts from the Jamā`ah by even a hand-span has relinquished the yoke of Islām from his neck until he returns. Whoever employs the slogans of *Jāhiliyyah* will be amongst

those brought to their knees in Hell.” They asked, ‘Messenger of Allāh, even if he prays and fasts?’ He replied, “Even if he prays and fasts and thinks that he is a Muslim. So call the Muslims with their names which were given them by Allāh: Muslims, believers, servants of Allāh.”⁹

(Ibn Kathīr then said), ‘This is a ḥasan ḥadīth and the part relevant to this verse is, “Allāh has created and you and provided for you, so worship Him and do not associate anything with Him.” This verse proves that Allāh Alone, Most High, should be singled out for worship with no partners. Many of the exegetes [- such as Rāzī and others -] used this verse to prove the existence of [the] Creator, [Most High], however it proves this by way of alluding to what is more so the case... There are many verses in the Qur’ān that prove this.’¹⁰

Ibn al-Mu`azz said,

Confounding! How can God be disobeyed,
How can the denier deny Him?
Yet everything contains a sign
Pointing to His oneness!

In exegesis to this verse, ibn `Abbās said, ‘(Taking) partner-gods is to commit *shirk* which in turn is less discernable than the crawling of an ant across a black rock in the depth of the night. It is to say, “By Allāh and your life, O so-and-so,” or, “By my life.” It is to say, “Were it not for this dog, the thief would have pounced on us,” or, “Were it not for this duck, the thief would have entered!” It is the saying of a person to his colleague, “Whatever Allāh willed and you willed.” It is the saying of a person, “Were it not for Allāh and so-and-so;” do not add, “so-and-so.” These are all examples of *shirk*.’

Ibn `Abbās clarifies here that all of these are examples of *shirk*.¹¹ All of these are done today, articulated on the tongues of many who know not the meaning of *Tawḥīd* or *shirk*. Bear these matters in mind for they are examples of great evil that must be proscribed and warned against since they are amongst the worst of the mortal sins.

Ibn `Abbās is using cases of minor *shirk* to point us towards the major cases.

“*Shirk which in turn is less discernable than the crawling of an ant across a black rock in the depth of the night.*”¹²

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb reports that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Whoever swears an oath by another besides Allāh has disbelieved or committed *shirk*.”

“*Whoever swears an oath by another besides Allāh.*”¹³

“*Has disbelieved or committed shirk,*” it is possible that the narrator was in doubt as to what the actual wording was or that the meaning of ‘or’ here is ‘and,’ i.e. he has disbelieved and committed *shirk*. The meaning of disbelief, *kufir*, is the lesser disbelief, and the meaning of *shirk*, the lesser *shirk*.¹⁴ This same wording has also been recorded on the authority of ibn Mas`ūd.¹⁵

Ibn Mas`ūd said, ‘That I take a false oath by Allāh is more beloved to me than taking a truthful oath by other than Him.’

It is known that to take an oath by Allāh falsely is a mortal sin, however *shirk* is worse than mortal sins even if the case of *shirk* be minor. This has been explained previously.¹⁶ If this is the case with minor *shirk*, what then of major *shirk* that leads to eternity in the Fire?! Examples of this would be supplicating to others besides Allāh, seeking succour with them, placing fervent hope in them, and asking a person to fulfil his needs. The majority of this nation in these times, and before these times, venerate graves, take them as idols, build edifices on them, and take them as Mosques. They build shrines over them in the name of the deceased in order to worship that person and venerate him, turning to him with their hearts, their words, and their deeds.

This major *shirk* which Allāh will not forgive is widespread. People have abandoned the verses of the Magnificent Qurʾān that proscribe this *shirk* and all that leads to it. Allāh, Most High, says,

“Who can do greater wrong than someone who invents lies against Allāh or denies His signs? Such people’s portion of the Book will catch up with them so that when Our messengers came to them to take them in death, saying, ‘Where are those you called upon besides Allāh?’ they will say, ‘They have forsaken us,’ testifying against themselves that they were disbelievers.”¹⁷

Allāh declared them disbelievers for supplicating to others besides Him in this world. Allāh, Most High, says

“All mosques belong to Allāh so do not call on anyone else besides Allāh.”¹⁸

“Say: ‘I only call upon my Lord and do not associate anyone else with Him.’ Say: ‘I possess no power to do you harm or to guide you right.’”¹⁹

These polytheists have reversed the state of affairs, they have opposed what the Messenger conveyed to the nation. They have opposed the stance he told us to take vis-avis himself and treated him in the very way that he prohibited them from, thereby falling into *shirk* and depending on others besides Allāh. One of them said:

Most generous of mankind, I have no one to take refuge in
Except you at the occurrence of widespread calamity.
If at the Day of Resurrection, he should not take me by my hand
Out of kindness, then say: O the slipping of my foot.
For verily amongst your bounties is this world and the Hereafter.
And part of your knowledge is knowledge of the Preserved Tablet and the Pen.

Look at how this poet has contended with the Book and Sunnah; look at how he has opposed Allāh and His Messenger! This poet’s sentiments are present in the hearts of many, especially those who lay claim to knowledge and cognisance. They opine that this poem, and any like it, should be read, and to venerate it is an action drawing one closer to Allāh. It is to Allāh we belong and to Him that we return!

Look at the profound ignorance in display here: the poet believes that there is no success except by resorting to him ﷺ and taking refuge with him rather than Allāh! Ponder this false praise that transgresses the bounds of the very type of praise that he ﷺ proscribed, “Do not falsely praise me as the Christians falsely praised the son of Mary, I am only a servant, so say: servant of Allāh and His Messenger.” This was recorded by Mālik and others.²⁰ Allāh, Most High, says,

“Say: ‘I do not say to you that I possess the treasures of Allāh, nor do I know the unseen, nor do I say to you that I am an angel.’”²¹

Hudhayfah (RA) reports that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Do not say, ‘Whatever Allāh willed and so-and-so willed,’ rather say, ‘Whatever Allāh willed, then so-and-so willed.’”

Anything annexed to something else with the ‘and’, *waw*, implies that the two are of the same level or ranking. This is because the *waw* is employed to lend the meaning of an unrestricted combination, as such it does not indicate a difference of ranking or sequence. To equate the Creator with the created is *shirk*; if it is in cases of minor *shirk* such as this one, it is ruled to be so, and if it is in cases of major *shirk*, it is ruled accordingly. Allāh, Most High, says that such people will state in the Abode of the Hereafter,

“By Allāh, we were plainly misguided when We equated you with the Lord of all the worlds.”²²

This, however, does not hold true when the word ‘then,’ *thumma*, is employed since the word annexed to this shows that one follows another in a sequence; therefore in this case, since the meaning is that one follows on from the other, there is nothing to be wary of in using this phrase.²³

It is reported that Ibrāhīm al-Nakha’ī said, ‘It is reprehensible for a person to say, “I take refuge with Allāh and with you.” It is permissible to say, “with Allāh, then with you,” or, “were it not for Allāh, then you.” Do not say, “Were it not for Allāh and you.”’

Concerning this, we have already explained what is permissible and what is not. However, this only applies to someone who is alive and present, able to do that thing or effectuate it; it is with regards such a person that the above discussion applies. It does not apply to the deceased who has no cognitive recognition of someone invoking him and has no ability to bring about harm or benefit. It is not permissible to depend on such a one in anything, no matter what form that may take. The Qur’ān has fully clarified this and announced that whoever invokes him, or places his hope in him in terms of speech or deed – outer or inner, has made him a god. Whoever contemplates the Qur’ān and understands it will attain clarity in his religion and Allāh is the One who grants accord.

Knowledge is not gained effortlessly; it is acquired by taking to the necessary means and causes. One person mentioned these with his words,

My brother! You will only acquire knowledge through six,
I will detail them to you lucidly:
Intelligence, desire, effort, sufficient means,
Tutorship of a teacher, and long hours!

More importantly: someone whom Allāh grants understanding and good memory and hence strives his utmost in acquiring it. Allāh grants His accord whoever He wills of His servants,

“...and taught you what you did not know before. Allāh’s favour to you was indeed immense.”²⁴

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allāh have mercy on him, explained this excellently in his poem:

Ignorance is a disease most destructive! Its cure:
Two in sequence, one in agreement:
A text of the Book or the Sunnah,
A doctor: a scholar, sagacious and pious.
Knowledge is of categories three,
There is no fourth. The truth is self-evident.
Knowledge of Allāh’s Attributes and Deeds,
So too the Names of the All-Merciful.

Command and prohibition: this is His religion.
His recompense on the Day of the Second Resurrection.
All are found in the Qur'ān and the Sunan
Conveyed by the one sent with the Scripture.
No person, sly of tongue has uttered
Other than these two, except in foolish raving.

¹ *al-Baqarah* (2): 22

² Ibn Abī Ḥātim #229 and Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-'Azīz al-Ḥamīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, said that the isnād was jayyid.

ʿĀ'ishah (RAH) reports that the Prophet ﷺ said, “*Shirk* is less discernable than the crawling of an ant across a smooth rock in a dark night. Its least form is to love some form of oppression and to hate some form of justice, and is the religion anything but love and hate? Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent says, “*Say, 'If you love Allāh, then follow me, Allāh will love you...'*”¹

1. *Āli 'Imrān* (3): 31

It was recorded by Ḥākim #3148 who said that it was ṣaḥīḥ but Dhahabī criticised him by stating that one of its narrators was weak. It was declared ḍa'īf by Albānī, *Ḍa'īf al-Jāmi'* #3432.

ʿIrāqī #3401 said, ‘Aḥmad and Ṭabarānī record the ḥadīth on the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, “Beware of this *shirk* for it is less discernable than the walk of an ant.” Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ḍuʿafā'* also records it on the authority of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. He and Dāruqūṭnī declared the ḥadīth ḍa'īf.’

However there is an authentic wording of this ḥadīth recorded by Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī on the authority of ibn ʿAbbās, “*Shirk* in my nation is less discernable than the crawling of an ant across a smooth rock” and Abū Bakr, “*Shirk* amongst you is more hidden than the crawling of an ant.” cf. Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* #3730-3731

³ Tirmidhī #1535 and Abū Dāwūd #3251 on the authority of ibn ʿUmar, not ʿUmar as the author, may Allāh have mercy on him, said.

Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan and it was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #4358, Ḥākim #7814 with Dhahabī agreeing, and Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'* #6080

⁴ Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr* #8902 and ʿAbdu'l-Razzāq #15929 with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād.

Mundhirī, *Targhīb*, vol. 3, pg. 372 said that its narrators were those of the Ṣaḥīḥ as did Haythamī, *Majma'*, vol. 4, pg. 177. Ibn ʿAbdu'l-Barr, *al-Istidhkār*, vol. 15, pp. 94-99 additionally quotes it as a saying of ibn ʿUmar.

⁵ Aḥmad #23265 and Abū Dāwūd #4980.

It was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by ʿIrāqī, *Mughnī* #3065, Nawawī, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Arnaʿūṭ et. al., and Albānī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* #137

⁶ Abdu'l-Razzāq #19811-19812 and ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Ṣamt* #344

⁷ Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-'Azīz al-Ḥamīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, said, ‘Know that part and parcel of actualising *Tawḥīd* is to avoid committing *shirk* with Allāh in wording, even if a prohibited meaning is not intended, i.e. the person articulating the words of habit, unintentionally. People could well, unintentionally, blurt out words of the type of minor *shirk*.

‘If you were to say, “But this verse was revealed concerning major *shirk*!” The response would be that the Salaf would adduce proofs dealing with major *shirk* as evidence against minor *shirk* as was done here by ibn ʿAbbās and others, and as mentioned by the author. Ibn ʿAbbās also explained it to refer to major *shirk* and others explained it to mean *shirk* in obedience. This is because all of these cases are subsumed by the term, *shirk*.’

⁸ *al-Baqarah* (2): 21-22

⁹ Aḥmad #17170-17800 and Tirmidhī #2863-2864

Tirmidhī said it was ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ gharīb. It was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by Ibn Khuzaymah #1895, Ḥākim #1534 with Dhahabī agreeing, ibn Hibbān #6233, Arna'ūṭ et. al., and Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb* #1720

¹⁰ Shaykh Ḥāmid ibn Muḥammad, *Fathu'llāh al-Ḥamīd al-Majīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, said, 'This shows that the word, *nidd*, comprises the meaning of major, minor, and hidden *shirk*. All cases of *shirk* are unjust and oppression, they are blameworthy and necessitate Allāh's displeasure and punishment.'

¹¹ Shaykh 'Uthmān al-Tamīmī, *Fathu'l-Ḥamīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, said, 'And this is the ruling for any words that suggest that Allāh could not have carried out what was decreed without the mediation of that object.'

¹² Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-'Azīz al-Ḥamīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, said, 'What he means is that the matters he mentioned are hidden to people, many are barely able to discern them let alone know them. He propounded an analogy for their hidden nature, comparing them to the footsteps of an ant: this is something incredibly difficult to detect. What then if it is walking across a rock, what then if you add to this the fact that it is black, what then if you add to this the fact that it is walking in the depths of the night?! This goes to prove just how indiscernible it is to those who claim Islām just as it shows how difficult it is to save oneself from it. It is for this reason that the ḥadīth of Abū Mūsā mentions that, "one day, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ addressed us, saying, 'People, beware of this *shirk* for it is less discernable than the walk of an ant.' A person asked him, 'Messenger of Allāh, how can we avoid it if it is less discernable than the walk of an ant?' He replied, 'Say: O Allāh, we take refuge with You from knowingly committing *shirk* and we ask Your forgiveness for that which we do not know.'" This was recorded by Aḥmad and Ṭabarānī.¹

1. Aḥmad #19606 and Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr* and *al-Awsaṭ* #3479; see fn. #2.

¹³ Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-'Azīz al-Ḥamīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, said, 'Ka'b said, "You commit *shirk* whereby a person says, 'No, by your father!', 'No, by the Ka'bah!', 'No, by your life!' and the likes. Swear an oath by Allāh, be it true or false, and do not swear an oath by any other." This was recorded by ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Ṣamt*.¹ The scholars are unanimously agreed that taking an oath can only be done by Allāh or His Attributes. They have also unanimously agreed that it is not allowed to take an oath by any other. Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr said, "It is not allowed to take an oath by any besides Allāh by consensus."² The claims of the later scholars that this prohibition is only one of reprehensibility is not to be given any weight as this is a totally false opinion. How can they say this when the Messenger ﷺ said that it was *kufīr* or *shirk* to do so?! Indeed, it is prohibited and this is why ibn Mas'ūd preferred falsely swearing an oath by Allāh rather than truthfully swearing an oath by another. This proves that taking an oath by another besides Allāh is graver than lying and lying is something prohibited in all religions. This then leads to the conclusion that taking an oath by another besides Allāh is from the greatest of sins.'

1. Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Ṣamt* #356 and ibn Abī Shaybah #12283 with a ṣaḥīḥ isnād.

2. Ibn 'Abdu'l-Barr, *al-Tamhīd*, vol. 12, pp. 652-653

¹⁴ Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-'Azīz al-Ḥamīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, said, 'Based on this wording, a group of the scholars have stated that whoever takes an oath by another besides Allāh has disbelieved through committing *shirk*. They said, "And this is why the Prophet ﷺ ordered such a person to renew his Islām by saying, 'None has the right to be worshipped save Allāh,'¹ were this sin not disbelief that ejects a person from the fold of Islām, he would not have enjoined him to this." The majority, however, said that the reference was not to that category of disbelief that ejects one from the fold of the religion, instead it was a case of minor *shirk* as was textually stated by ibn 'Abbās and others. His ordering the person who swore by al-Lāt and al-'Uzza to articulate the testimony faith was a case of expiation coupled with seeking forgiveness. A ḥadīth has, "Whoever takes an oath by saying, 'By al-Lāt and al-'Uzza,' then he must say, 'There is none worthy of worship save Allāh,'² and another narration has, '...he must seek forgiveness.'³ This, therefore, is expiation for his stating something in a form that ostensibly suggests veneration to idols, it was not a command to renew his Islām. Even if one were to accept that it was a command to renew one's Islām, it was to renew a deficiency therein; not to renew it because he had disbelieved.

'However, what the grave-worshippers do (is a different case altogether). If you ask one of them to take an oath by Allāh, he will do so, taking an oath for whatever you wish, be it true or false. But were you to

ask him to take an oath by a Shaykh, or his earth, or his life, or the likes, he will never articulate the oath if it is false. This is major *shirk* without a shadow of doubt because the object of his oath has become greater and more deserving of fear than Allāh. This is a state that not even the idol-worshippers reached for their strenuous oaths were taking by Allāh, “and they swear by Allāh their most binding oaths (that) Allāh will not raise up him who dies.”⁴

1. Referring to the ḥadīth in which Sa’d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ said, ‘I took an oath by al-Lāt and al-’Uzza, upon which my colleagues said, “You have said something detestable!” I then went to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “I have recently (accepted Islām) and I took an oath by al-Lāt and al-’Uzza.” He said, “Say, ‘None has the right to be worshipped save Allāh Alone with no partner,’ then spit lightly on your left three times, take refuge (with Allāh) and never repeat it again.”

It was recorded by Aḥmad #1590-1622, ibn Mājah #2097, and Nasā’ī #3777. It was declared ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #4364-4365 and Arna’ūṭ et. al.

2. Bukhārī #5765 and Muslim #1647 on the authority of Abū Hurayrah.

3. Bazzār #1140 and Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār* 2/301 #832 and it is ṣaḥīḥ.

4. *al-Naḥl* (16): 38

¹⁵ Shaykh ‘Abdu’l-Hādī al-’Ajīli, *Taḥqīq al-Tajrīd fi Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, said, ‘Abū Dāwūd and Nasā’ī record on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Do not swear an oath by your fathers, or your mothers, or partner-gods; only swear an oath by Allāh, and only swear by Allāh if you are being honest.”¹ ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (RA) reports that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ heard him saying, “By my father!” and said, “Allāh, Mighty and Magnificent, has prohibited you from swearing by your fathers.” ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb then said, “By Allāh, I have never heedfully sworn in this way since I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ proscribing it, nor have I related it from someone else.”²

‘As regards the ḥadīth recorded by Abū Dāwūd with his isnād concerning the story of the Bedouin in which the Prophet ﷺ said, “By his father, he will be successful if he spoke truthfully!”³ another narration has, “By his father, he will be successful if he spoke truthfully – or, by his father, he will enter Paradise if he spoke truthfully.”⁴ Khaṭṭābī said (summarised), “The phrase, ‘By his father,’ is a sentence in vogue amongst the Arabs, the purpose of which is emphasis. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ prohibited a person from swearing by his father, so this phrase would then have been used before the proscription; it is also possible that he said it in the sense that was current amongst the Arabs, not intending the actual oath. This then would be the same as unintentional oaths that are overlooked as in Allāh’s saying, ‘Allāh will not take you to task for what is unintentional in your oaths.’⁵ Another response has also been given which is that he ﷺ omitted the governing word of the sentence, and the complete sentence would be, ‘No, by the Lord of his father.’ [The Prophet ﷺ would then have prohibited them from this phrase because they did not intend the inclusion of the governing word since their practice was one of venerating forefathers.]”⁶

‘If it is said that Allāh, Most High, swears oaths by objects of His creation such as the night and the sun, the response to this is that Allāh, Most High, can swear by whatever object of His creation He wishes thereby alerting us of its status and excellence.

‘As regards taking an oath by trust, a ḥadīth, reported on the authority of Buraydah, has the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saying, “Whoever swears by trust is not of us.” Khaṭṭābī said, “It would seem that the reprehensibility here is because he commanded us to take oaths by Allāh and His Attributes and trust is not one of His Attributes, it is one of His commands and obligations. Therefore, they were prohibited from swearing by it since it would effectively equate trust with His Names and Attributes.”⁸ Abū Ḥanīfah said, “Whoever says, ‘By the trust of Allāh,’ has compacted an oath and must give expiation.” Shafī’ī said, “It is not regarded as a valid oath and no expiation is due.”⁹

1. Abū Dāwūd #3248 and Nasā’ī #3800. It was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #4357 and Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Abū Dāwūd*.

2. Bukhārī #6647 and Muslim #1646

3. Muslim #11, Abū Dāwūd #391-392. cf. Bukhārī #46-1891-2678-6956

4. Muslim #11

5. *al-Baqarah* (2): 225

6. Khaṭṭābī, *Ma’ālim al-Sunan*, vol. 1, pg. 197 #392.

7. Abū Dāwūd #3253. It was ruled ṣaḥīḥ by ibn Ḥibbān #4348, Ḥākim #7816 with Dhahabī agreeing, Nawawī, *al-Adhkār* #1154 & *Riḥāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* #1718, and Albānī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥah* #94

8. Khaṭṭābī, *Ma’ālim al-Sunan*, vol. 3, pg. 371 #3253

9. Khaṭṭābī, *Ma’ālim al-Sunan*, vol. 3, pg. 371 #3253, Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 11, pg. 117

Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-ʿAzīz al-Ḥamīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, arguing the case for abrogation, said, after having quoted the ḥadīth already mentioned in the previous quote, ‘The scholars have mentioned various responses to this:

‘The first: Ibn ʿAbdu’l-Barr said that the words, “By his father, he will be successful if he spoke truthfully!” were not preserved, and that the narrator of these words, Ismāʿīl ibn Jaʿfar also reports it as, “By Allāh, he will be successful if he spoke truthfully.” He then said, “This takes precedence over the other wording because that wording is objectionable and repudiated by authentic narrations; moreover, it is not mentioned in the relation of Mālik at all. Some thought that a mistake had occurred when writing the narration and that the words ‘By Allāh,’ had been mistaken for, ‘By his father.’”¹ I say: this response can only hold true for this one ḥadīth alone, it cannot be used as a response to the other ḥadīths.

‘The second: this phrase was said on their tongues of habit without the intent of taking an actual oath. The proscription only applies to those who actually intended to take an oath. This response was mentioned by Bayhaqī² and Nawawī said that it was a good response.³ I say: this response is unacceptable. The ḥadīths proscribing it are unrestricted and do not differentiate between one who intended an oath and one who did not. This is further strengthened by the fact that Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ took an oath one time by al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzah, it is extremely unlikely that he actually intended the oath, rather it is most likely that he just said it of habit, yet despite this, the Prophet ﷺ prohibited him from it. The most that one can say is that it is overlooked when someone says it of habit, but to say that it is permissible for Muslims to have the habit of saying this, then never! Additionally, one is in need of a text to show that this was something they would say of habit, unintentionally, and that the proscription only applies to those who actually intended an oath. There is no such text.

The third: The intent behind such phrases was emphasis, not veneration. The proscription only applies to those who intended veneration. I say: this response is even more unacceptable than the previous and it seems that the proponent of this view did not consider what he was saying! What is the purpose of an oath except to lay emphasis on the issue in question by mentioning some object that both parties hold in veneration and esteem? Mention of the object of an oath in an oath intrinsically necessitates veneration. Additionally, the ḥadīth (concerning the proscription) are unrestricted and do not make this differentiation. Moreover, one is in need of a text to prove that such phrases are permissible for emphasis, but not veneration, and there is no such text.

The fourth: This occurred in the beginning of Islām, then it was abrogated. So whatever ḥadīth mentions an oath was stated before the abrogation, i.e. before the proscription of swearing by another besides Allāh. This response was mentioned by Māwardī. Suhaylī said, “This is the view of most commentators.” Ibn al-ʿArabī went to the extent of saying, “It is reported that he ﷺ would take an oath by his father until he was prohibited from doing so.” Suhaylī said, “This is not authentic.”⁴ The same was stated by others. This is the response which is correct and is supported by the fact that the usage of such phrases was in vogue until it was prohibited.’

1. Ibn ʿAbdu’l-Barr, *al-Tamhīd*, vol. 14, pg. 367
2. Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubrā*, vol. 10, pg. 29
3. Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, pg. 168
4. Suhaylī, *al-Rawḍ al-Unuf*, vol. 4, pg. 68

Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār*, vol. 2, pg. 294, also arguing the case of abrogation said, ‘Then we were requested to show which of the two (categories of texts) abrogated the other.’ He then quotes the ḥadīth of Qutaylah, which will be explained in chapter 44, that ‘a Jew came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, “You commit *shirk*, you say, ‘Whatever Allāh willed and you willed,’ and you say, ‘By the Kaʿbah!’” So the Prophet ﷺ ordered them to say, “By the Lord of the Kaʿbah!” when they wished to take an oath and to say, “Whatever Allāh willed, then you willed.”’ He then said, ‘This ḥadīth then mentions that cause of the proscription for swearing by another besides Allāh, Most High. It shows that the abrogating text was the proscription and not the texts showing permissibility.’

This issue is treated more fully in chapter 43.

¹⁶ Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-ʿAzīz al-Ḥamīd fī Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, said, ‘Ibn Masʿūd preferred a false oath by Allāh to a truthful one by another because taking an oath by Allāh is *Tawḥīd* and taking an oath by another is *shirk*. So if one assumes that an oath taken by another besides Allāh is truthful, the good deed of *Tawḥīd* is greater than the good deed of being truthful, and the evil of lying is less than the evil of *shirk*. This

was mentioned by Shaykhu'l-Islām.¹ This narration proves that taking an oath by another besides Allāh is graver than a false oath, it also shows that minor *shirk* is worse than mortal sins, and it alludes to the famous principle that one takes the lesser of two evils in the case that he has to choose one of them.'

1. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, vol. 4, pg. 621

¹⁷ *al-A`rāf* (7): 37

¹⁸ *al-Jinn* (72): 18

¹⁹ *al-Jinn* (72): 20-21

²⁰ Bukhārī #3445-6830 on the authority of `Umar; it was not recorded by Mālik as the author, may Allāh have mercy on him, said.

Ibn Ḥajr, *Fath*, vol. 12, pg. 181 said, '*Itrā`* is to praise someone falsely.' `Alī al-Qārī, *Sharḥ Mishkāt* #4897 said, '*Itrā`* is to go to an extreme in praising...the understanding of this is that praising him in other ways is permissible.' `Alī al-Qārī, *Sharḥ Shamā`il*, vol. 2, pg. 161 said about his words, "*I am only his servant...*", 'Meaning I have no quality other than that of servitude and messengership; this is the peak of perfection that a created being can reach, so do not say anything about me that negates these two attributes and do not believe that I have a quality other than these two... the ḥadīth indicate that it is permissible to describe him with anything that does not reach the boundaries of Lordship, *rubūbiyyah*, and Godship, *ulūhiyyah*.'

²¹ *al-An`ām* (6): 50

²² *al-Shu`arā`* (26): 97-98

²³ This issue is fully explained in chapter 44

²⁴ *al-Nisā`* (4): 113