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Q: 220 ? Title: I have received an e-mail below from a friend which I require clarification regarding the use of the term Maulana for our learned scholars. I have always thought that the word ?Moulana ?meant guide and as the Alims are our guide the term was appropriate.

Question

As Salamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu Mufti Ebrahim Desai

I have received an e-mail below from a friend which I require clarification regarding the use of the term Maulana for our learned scholars. I have always thought that the word ?Moulana ?meant guide and as the Alims are our guide the term was appropriate.

Linguistically Maula means protector, helper, and supporter.

I am not an Alim and look forward to your comments and feedback. I would appreciate it very much Jazakallahu Khairan. I will forward your response to my friend to clarify the issue.

- Questioner...

E mail Received:

As Salamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu

As I mentioned to you, sometime ago I did a Qur'an search on the word Maula ? it is difficult to search Arabic words because the pronouns form part of the word. You will notice that most of the time this word refers to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala and in one place to the Fire and in one place as a master in the parable of the slave and master, in one place to idols and in one place to near relatives

If you study these Ayah with the word ?Maula? in their context mentioned Qur'an you will find that Maulana ? Our Protector is a term we should only use for Allah Subhanahu wa Ta?ala and none other. If you take the example you quoted from Surah Ad-Dukhan, you will realize that except Allah none one can be our Maula not even our near relatives. That?s my understanding of that Ayah.

Here are the Ayah:

Maulana ?our Maula

You are our Protector, give us victory over the disbelievers (Surah Al-Baqarah 2: 286)

Say: "Nothing shall ever happen to us except what Allah has ordained for us. He is our Mawla (protector)." And in Allah let the believers put their trust. (Surah At-Taubah 9: 51)

Maulahu? - his Maula

If you two turn in repentance to Allah, your hearts are indeed so inclined; but if you help one another against him, then verily, Allah is his Protector, and Jibril, and the righteous among the believers; and after that the angels are his helpers. (Surah At-Tahrim 66:4)

And Allah gives an example of two men, one of them dumb, who has no power over anything, and he is a burden on his (Maula) master; whichever way he directs him, he brings no good. Is such a man equal to one who commands justice, and is himself on the straight path. (Surah An-Nahl 16: 76)

Mujahid said, "This also refers to idols and the True God, may He be exalted." Meaning that the idol is dumb and cannot speak or say anything, good or otherwise. It cannot do anything at all, no words, no action, it is dependent and is a burden on its master.? (Tafsir ibn Kathir)

Maulahum- their Maula

Then they are returned to Allah, their Master, the Just Lord. Surely, His is the judgment and He is the swiftest in taking account. (Surah Al-An?am 6: 62)

There! Every person will know (exactly) what he had earned before and they will be brought back to Allah, their rightful Mawla (Lord), and their invented false deities will vanish from them.) (Surah Yunus 10: 30)

Mulakum- your Maula (plural)

Allah has already ordained for you (O men) the absolution from your oaths. And Allah is your Protector and He is the All-Knower, the All-Wise. (Surah At-Tahrim 66: 2)

Nay, Allah is your protector, and He is the best of helpers. (Surah Al-Imran 3: 150)

And if they turn away, then know that Allah is your protector -- (what) an excellent protector and (what) an excellent helper! (Surah Al-Anfal 8: 40)

And strive hard in Allah's cause as you ought to strive. He has chosen you, and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship: it is the religion of your father Ibrahim.

He has named you Muslims both before and in this (Qur'an), that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you be witnesses over mankind! So, perform the Salah, give the Zakah and hold fast to Allah. He is your Mawla, what an Excellent Mawla and what an Excellent Helper! (Surah Al-Hajj 22: 78)

So, this Day no ransom shall be taken from you, nor of those who disbelieved. Your abode is the Fire. That is your protector, and worst indeed is that destination. (Surah Al-Hadid 57: 15)

(Your abode is the Fire.) means, the Fire is your final destination and to it will be your return for residence,

(That is your protector,) meaning, it is the worthy shelter for you rather than any other residence, because of your disbelief and doubt, and how evil is the Fire for Final Destination.? (Tafsir ibn Kathir)

This Ayah is a stern warning that we should not make the Fire our Protector in the Akhirah.

Mawla and the Maula (Protector and The Protector)

Surah Al-Anfal 8: 40 (Mentioned above) an excellent protector here refers to none other than Allah.

He calls unto him whose harm is nearer than his profit; certainly an evil Mawla (Protector) and certainly an evil `Ashir. (Surah Al-Hajj 22: 13)

(certainly an evil Mawla and certainly an evil `Ashir!) Mujahid said, "This means the idols." The meaning is: "How evil a friend is this one upon whom he calls instead of Allah as a helper and supporter."? (Tafsir ibn Kathir)

Another warning making idols our Maula

The Day when a Maula (near relative) cannot avail a Maula (near relative) in aught, and no help can they receive. (Surah Ad-Dukhan 44: 41)

This meaning is very clear none can protect us (be our Maula) on that day except Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala

That is because Allah is the Protector of those who believe, whereas the disbelievers have no

protector. (Surah Muhammad 47: 11)

I could not research this word in the Ahadith as I don't have the Hadith in Arabic, only English, so it is hard to say what word was used for protector, helper etc.

My conclusion is that in the Glorious Qur'an Maula refers mainly to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala, yes there are other meanings to word like helper, supporter, master, I accept that. Even so I feel instead of using Maulana for an Islamic teacher or scholar, to stay way from using a term when there is a doubt. It is better not to use this term, instead use Ustad or Mu'allim, Shaikh, Molvi these terms don't refer to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala.

How often we read the last two Ayah of Surah Al-Baqarah, in fact we are told to pray those two Ayah every night ???Anta Maulana???.Allah you are Maulana.

But then again I am not a scholar, but my heart and inner feelings tell me not to use this term for our religious teachers and scholars.

The point I am trying to make - lets refrain from using terms which may or may not lead us to commit Shirk??.this would be a minor Shirk like the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam) warned us about the minor shirks which we are not aware of like doing things to show off to people ? Ar-Riya or a major Shirk like making our scholars our protectors ? Allah forbid.

And going back to the example of Rabb you mentioned in the meeting - do we find people calling themselves Rabbana Ibrahim so and so; no we don't. ? Yes Rabb is the meaning of Lord. Rabbal-Musa ? the Lord of Musa but Rabbana-ONLY Allah.

Another good example I can think of is Nabi'ena = Our Prophet whenever we say Nabi'ena we are referring to Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam) and no one else. When we say Nabi'ena Ibrahim or Musa? it okay because they are our Prophets too? but when we use Nab'ena by itself we are referring to no other than our Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam). ? Correct me if I am wrong.

Dear Brother Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala has blessed you with immense knowledge of HIS DEEN and put you in a gifted position to service Islam and the Muslims, don't let others equate to you His Level by calling you Maulana. You are not our Maulana Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala is. May Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala protect us from ourselves. Ameen!

Sori for this long email, I know you will share this email with others so I tried to be as thorough as I could. ? If I made a mistake I would appreciate it, if for the sake and blessings from Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala you will point it out to me. Insha Allah. Since I am not a scholar only a student and my knowledge of Arabic is also very limited, I would be wrong in my understanding and reasoning.

Anything good I have written is entirely thru the Grace and Mercy of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala and errors I made are entirely my fault and thru the whisperings of Shaitan.

May Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala help us to understand His Deen and worship Him according to His Book and the Sunnah of His Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi wa Sallam) Ameen!

Wa Alaikum Salam wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu

Answer

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Assalaamu `alaykum waRahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

It is a great bounty and blessing to have scholars and academics in our midst. It is through them that Allah Ta'ala will keep the knowledge of Deen alive. In a narration of Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, Nabi ﷺ has said,

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?Allah Ta?ala will not take knowledge away suddenly from his servants; rather he would take it away by taking away the lives of the Ulama...? (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

In the Quran, Allah Ta?ala praises the Ulama by saying,

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(11)

?Allah has raised the status of those who belief and those who have been blessed with knowledge by many ranks and Allah is fully aware of what you do.?(Al-Mujadalah, 11)

In another verse Allah Ta?ala says,

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?Say, are those who know equal to those who do not know?? (Az-Zumar, 9)

Nabi ??? ????? ????? has mentioned the virtues and high pedestal of a Scholar by saying,

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?The status of a scholar over a non-scholar is like my status over the lowest of you.? (Sunan at-Tirmidhi, 5/50)

These are merely a few verses and Ahadith which exemplify the great status which an Alim has in the Shari?ah

In this world we observe that every person of high rank and status is shown honour and addressed by titles. For example, in court a person would be forced to stand in honour of the judge. It would also be incumbent upon him to address the judge by his title. If this is the case of people of this world, how much more respect should we show on those whom Allah Ta?ala and his Nabi **??? ????? ?????** have honoured? How much more should we not address them by their titles?

Reverting to your query, the author has acknowledged that ?he is not a Scholar?, ?he has not researched this issue in the Ahadith? and ?his knowledge of Arabic is very limited?. How then was he so bold to pass and propagate a judgement on his own? What is more astonishing is that he has acknowledged the Arabic word *Maula* has more than one meaning and has also quoted numerous verses in this regard. Each one of these verses is a proof against him that the word *Maula* can be used for others besides Allah.

Imam Bukhari (May Allah Ta'ala have mercy on him) has mentioned many more meanings for the word *Maula*.

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This further proves that others besides Allah can be called a *Maula*. In fact, Nabi ﷺ himself called Hadhrat Zaid a *Maula* as narrated in Sahih al-Bukhari,

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This sufficiently proves that using the word *Maula* for others besides Allah cannot be termed as *Shirk*

Furthermore, it is amazing to see how the author of the 'fatwa' did not observe in the verse he has quoted from Surah at-Tahrim (66:4) that the righteous amongst the Believers can be called *Maula*.

Allah Ta'ala mentions in this verse that Allah, Jibra'eel (Alayhi as Salaam), the angels **and the pious believers**

are the

Maula

of those who assist one another against

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Remember, by a quality being attributed to Allah Ta'ala, it does not necessarily mean that that quality cannot be used for others. Allah Ta'ala is *Rauf* and *Raheem*, yet Allah Ta'ala called
Nabi ??? ???? ???? ??

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with these same two attributes.

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(128)

Likewise, Allah Ta'ala is *Haleem*, yet Allah Ta'ala used this same word for Ebrahim (Alayhi as Salaam)

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A similar example to this is the word 'master' in the English language. This word can be used for Allah Ta'ala and it also can be used for anyone else in authority.

Therefore, there is no prohibition in using the word *Maula* for Scholars.

And Allah knows best

Wassalamu Alaikum

Darul Iftaa, Madrassah In'aamiyyah