

God's Sole Right to Worship

“O mankind, worship your Lord who has created you and those before you, that you may become righteous. He Who has made the earth a resting-place for you and the sky a canopy, and has sent down water from the sky and thereby brought forth fruits for your sustenance. Do not, then, claim that there is any power that could rival God, when you know.” (Quran 2:21-22)



In these verses is the first commandment mentioned in the Quran, God proves the illogicality of worshipping others besides or instead of Him. He addresses humanity as a whole to direct all acts of worship to Him alone. He announces to them that He is their Lord, Sustainer, and Creator. Human beings did not appear out of nowhere, but rather

God is the One who brought them into being out of nothingness. After their creation, God did not leave them on their own, rather He took care of them when they were in the womb of their mothers, and God has been caring for them throughout their life by providing for them various sources of sustenance. He created things in this life in such a way that they would be of benefit and comfort for people. Therefore, it is the Sole right of God – who created us and those who came before us - that He be worshipped, for it is He and none else who provided us these things.

Everything apart from God, such as humans, angels, and spirits, are created by God. Thus, creation should not be adored and worshipped as God. No created being owns or controls anything in the universe and, therefore, can neither harm nor benefit without God's permission. God asks us rhetorically, how can we worship other beings besides Him while we know deep inside that God has no equal or rival? Due to this, God, and none other, has the sole right to command and He, and none else, deserves our strict obedience. He deserves to be singled out in all acts of worship, without association of any partners.

But so often we see worship being reduced to dry, empty rituals. God informs us in this verse that the goal of worship is to achieve *Taqwa*. In most Quran translations, *Taqwa* is translated as fear, piety, or righteousness. Perhaps a more accurate translation is 'God-consciousness' or 'God-awareness.' *Taqwa* is to be aware of God's presence at all times and to put a shield between oneself and God's displeasure by doing what is right. God does not benefit and is not in need of our worship, rather worship, as all His other commandments, is of benefit to our own selves. When a person worships God,

they are reminded about Him, and in turn reminded of the purpose of their life, and they themselves will be discouraged from committing vain and evil deeds. These reminders lead to *Taqwa* or God-consciousness. If a person achieves this state of being, they do or say nothing except that they keep in mind the true reality of that deed, whether it is pleasing to his Lord or incurs His anger.