

Absolute Power and Greatness Belong Only to God

Throughout his life, man encounters many events. At times, he may fall under the influence of people whom he regards as powerful, and at other times he may occupy his mind with concerns about the future. Sometimes he magnifies the means he possesses in his own eyes, and sometimes he may regard the difficulties he encounters as obstacles that cannot be overcome. Yet there is an important truth underlying all these assessments: Whom or what does man actually regard as great?

The truth revealed by the Qur'an is this: Absolute greatness belongs to God alone. It is God Who created the heavens and the earth from nothing, created all living things and ordained every event with His infinite knowledge and wisdom. Man, on the other hand, is a created, limited servant who is in need of God's mercy and help at every moment.

The outlook of a person who comprehends this truth changes completely. People, positions, wealth, health, diseases, difficulties and all the temporary elements belonging to the life of this world then lose their greatness in the true sense. That is because all of these are merely causes that exist through God's creation and can only have an effect by His will.



Man Comes Under the Influence of Whatever He Regards as Great

Man can often, without being aware of it, attach more significance than necessary to certain beings. He may feel apprehensive of people whom he thinks possess power, regard wealthy people as beyond reach or imagine that people of rank possess a determining power over his life. Yet all these powers in the life of this world are temporary. A person who appears powerful may suddenly become powerless, great fortunes may disappear in a short time, and health may give way to illness. Many examples of this have occurred throughout history. That is because no power in the life of this world is independent and permanent. True and unchanging power belongs solely to God's might and sovereignty.

God reveals this truth in the Qur'an as follows:

Everyone on it [the earth] will pass away; but the Face of your Lord will remain, Master of Majesty and Generosity. (Surat ar-Rahman, 26-27)

Al-Kabir, one of God's names in the Qur'an, expresses that He possesses infinite greatness and glory. God's greatness is an absolute greatness that cannot be compared with any being. When man reflects on this truth, he realizes how limited and temporary many things he magnifies in his life actually are. That is because even the person who appears the most powerful may, by God's will, become helpless in the face of a single illness. The greatest fortunes may be lost in an

instant. The systems that appear most firmly established may change within a short time. No being possesses any independent power of its own. Everything exists through God's might and takes place by His will.

God reveals this truth as follows:

That is because God is the Real and what you call on apart from Him is false. God is the All-High, the Most Great. (Surat al-Hajj, 62)

The Source of Fears Is the Failure to Properly Comprehend God's Infinite Might

One of the emotions that troubles man most is fear. Anxiety about the future, concern over livelihood, fear of failure, attaching importance to what people think or the fear of being left alone may constrict a person's heart. Yet underlying these fears is often a failure to properly appreciate God's infinite might. That is because when a person assesses events only in terms of their apparent causes, he may feel helpless. A believer, however, knows that it is God Who creates the causes and Who gives them the power to bring about results. Causes can only have an effect by God's will.

A seed sprouting by breaking through the soil, rain falling, the Sun rising, the heart beating, a wound healing and a baby coming into the world... Each one of these is a manifestation of God's infinite artistry of creation. When man sincerely reflects on these truths, he better comprehends God's knowledge and might, which encompass everything at every moment.

[He is] the Knower of the Unseen and the Visible, the Most Great, the High-Exalted. (Surat ar-Ra'd, 9)



Causes Do Not Possess Real Power

One of the important misconceptions satan suggests to people is to present causes as though they possessed an independent power. A person may sometimes think that a doctor heals, medicine provides a cure, an employer provides sustenance or powerful people can have a determining influence over destiny. Yet all of these are merely means created by God. It is God Who grants healing. It is God Who creates sustenance. It is God alone Who grants success, protects and tests whenever He wills. Causes have no independent power of their own; they can only be the means to results by God's will.

Man resorts to causes, takes the necessary precautions and makes every effort within his power. Yet in his heart, he knows that real influence belongs to God alone. That is because regarding causes as the true possessors of power may cause man to fail to properly appreciate God's absolute might. Attaching more significance than necessary to causes may lead him to fall into idolatry. Idolatry is one of the major sins.

God reveals the following about idolatry in the Qur'an:

God does not forgive anything being associated with Him but He forgives whoever He wills for anything other than that. Anyone who associates something with God has committed a terrible crime. (Surat an-Nisa: 48)

For this reason, while a believer adheres to causes, he binds his heart to God alone. That is because he knows that it is God Who opens all doors, makes all difficulties easy and creates all results.



Reflecting on God's Greatness Deepens Faith

The outlook on life of a person who comprehends God's greatness changes. He does not become caught up in needless fear and anxiety in the face of events. That is because he knows that everything takes place under God's infinite knowledge, wisdom and control.

A believer pays attention not only to the apparent aspect of the events he encounters, but also to the wisdom God creates in those events. When he encounters difficulties, rather than rebelling, he thinks that God will create what is best for him. This understanding gives man a profound sense of trust, peace and submission. That is because a believer knows that no event that befalls him is a coincidence. Everything is part of the destiny determined by God's infinite knowledge.

For this reason, the praise or criticism of people ceases to be a true criterion for someone who comprehends God's greatness. People's thoughts are changeable; someone who praises a person today may criticize him tomorrow, and someone who is valued may behave differently over

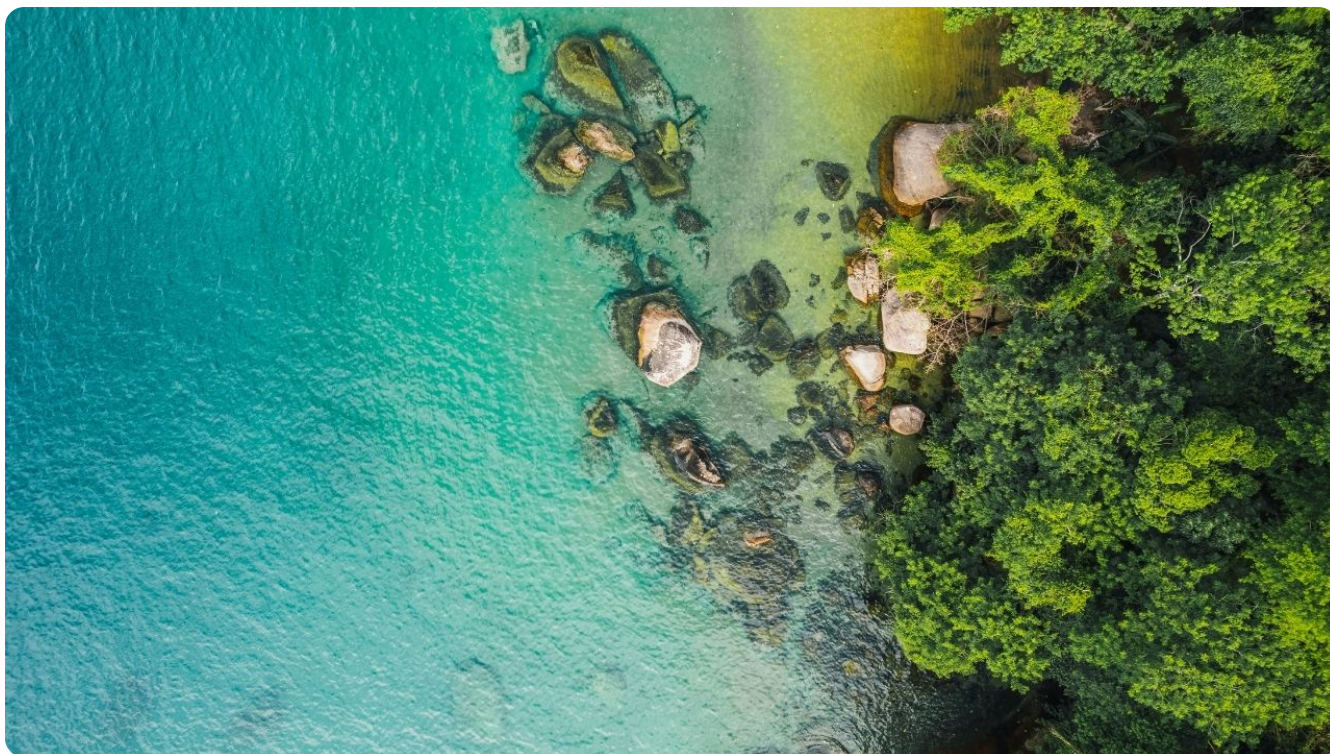
time. If a person shapes his life solely according to people's assessments, he becomes attached to a constantly changing and unreliable criterion. What truly matters, however, is earning God's approval. That is because God's judgment is the absolute truth. A person's worth in God's Sight is determined not by worldly criteria, but by his sincerity, fear of God and good moral character.

The establishment of God's greatness in the heart also brings humility with it. Man knows that the reason, health, knowledge, abilities and all the blessings he possesses are favors from God. He thus distances himself from pride; rather than attributing his achievements to himself, he gives thanks to God. That is because unless God wills, man can possess no blessing and attain no success.

God reveals:

The Lord of the heavens and Earth and everything in between them, if you are people with certainty. There is no deity but Him—He gives life and causes to die—your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers, the previous peoples. (Surat ad-Dukhan, 7-8)

Comprehending God's greatness also strengthens patience. A person may sometimes encounter events whose wisdom he cannot immediately understand. Yet a person who knows that God possesses infinite wisdom considers that every event must contain goodness and wisdom. An event that appears difficult today may be the beginning of a great blessing in the future. That is because man can only make an assessment with his limited knowledge and in terms of the moment in which he lives. God, however, possesses infinite knowledge encompassing the past, present and future. For this reason, a believer lives by trusting in his Lord and submitting to His judgment.



Every Proof in the Universe Shows God's Infinite Greatness

In the Qur'an, man is advised to reflect by looking at the heavens, the earth, the mountains, the stars and living things. That is because every created being is full of proofs displaying God's infinite might and matchless artistry. The transformation of night into day, the flawless order of the seasons, the extraordinary systems in the human body and the delicate balances within a single cell are only a few of the countless examples displaying the perfection in God's creation. The more man reflects on these proofs, the more his outlook centered on the life of this world weakens, and the more deeply he comprehends God's greatness.

God reveals His absolute might in the Qur'an as follows:

God keeps a firm hold on the heavens and earth, preventing them from vanishing away. And if they vanished no one could then keep hold of them. Certainly He is Most Forbearing, Ever-Forgiving. (Surat al-Fatir, 41)

Conclusion: True Greatness Belongs to God Alone

The greatest truth in man's life is to comprehend God's existence, oneness and infinite greatness. What matters for a believer is not merely to believe in God's existence, but to live with a profound awareness of His glory, might and absolute sovereignty over everything.

A person who reflects on God's greatness as he should knows that every event he encounters, every beauty he sees and every blessing he possesses comes into being through God's creation. Thus, his heart does not become excessively attached to the temporary values of the life of this world; he directs true trust, love and devotion to God alone.

A person who comprehends God's greatness does not regard any being as possessing power independently of God. People's positions, wealth, power or status in the life of this world do not represent any true greatness in his eyes. That is because he knows that all of these exist by God's will and can likewise change by His will.

This understanding brings about true maturity in man's soul. A person strives to live according to God's approval, rather than according to people's praise or criticism. That is because people's assessments may change, but God's judgment is always the absolute truth and just.



A person who feels God's greatness in his heart does not attribute any blessing he possesses to himself. He knows that his reason, health, knowledge, abilities and means are favors from God. For this reason, he distances himself from pride and becomes a grateful and humble servant.

At the same time, this understanding gives man a powerful sense of submission and trust in God. That is because a believer knows that there is wisdom in every event God creates. Man may sometimes be unable to immediately understand the wisdom in the events he encounters; yet he remains patient, trusting that God possesses infinite knowledge and wisdom. That is because man's knowledge is limited, whereas God's knowledge encompasses everything.

A person who comprehends God's greatness understands that the beauties he loves are actually manifestations of God's artistry and mercy. The beauty in flowers, the loveliness in living things, the flawless order in the universe and the good qualities seen in people are proofs of God's infinite artistry of creation. For this reason, true love directs man toward God, the true Owner of these beauties.

In conclusion, the only Being man should regard as great is God. True power, true might and true glory belong to Him alone. A person who sincerely comprehends God's greatness is freed from the temporary influences of the life of this world; his heart becomes filled with peace, trust and submission.

God informs us in the Qur'an:

God, there is no deity but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. He is not subject to drowsiness or sleep. Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him. Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them but they cannot grasp any of His knowledge save what He wills. His Footstool encompasses the heavens and the earth and their preservation does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Magnificent. (Surat al-Baqara, 255)

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