

Associating Partners with God Is a Disease of the Soul

Some people do not believe in God. As for some of those who say that they believe in God, they may, without realizing it, draw close to associating partners with God through various thoughts and actions. This truth is revealed in the Qur'an as follows:

“And most of them believe in God only when they can attribute partners (to Him).”
(Surah Yusuf, 106)

Associating partners with God is not limited merely to turning to idols, as most people think. Its real danger lies in failing to comprehend, as one ought, God's absolute power, sovereignty, and His uniqueness in creation.

Sometimes, without realizing it, a person may attribute an independent power to the causes that God has created. Yet all causes are merely means through which results come about only by God's will. For this reason, associating partners with God is a disease of the soul from which the believer must guard himself with the utmost care throughout his life.

At times, a person may think that an event has occurred apart from God's will; he may imagine that a word, an action, or an outcome has come about independently of God's knowledge and creation. Yet this is a serious error arising from a failure to appreciate God's infinite power as one ought.

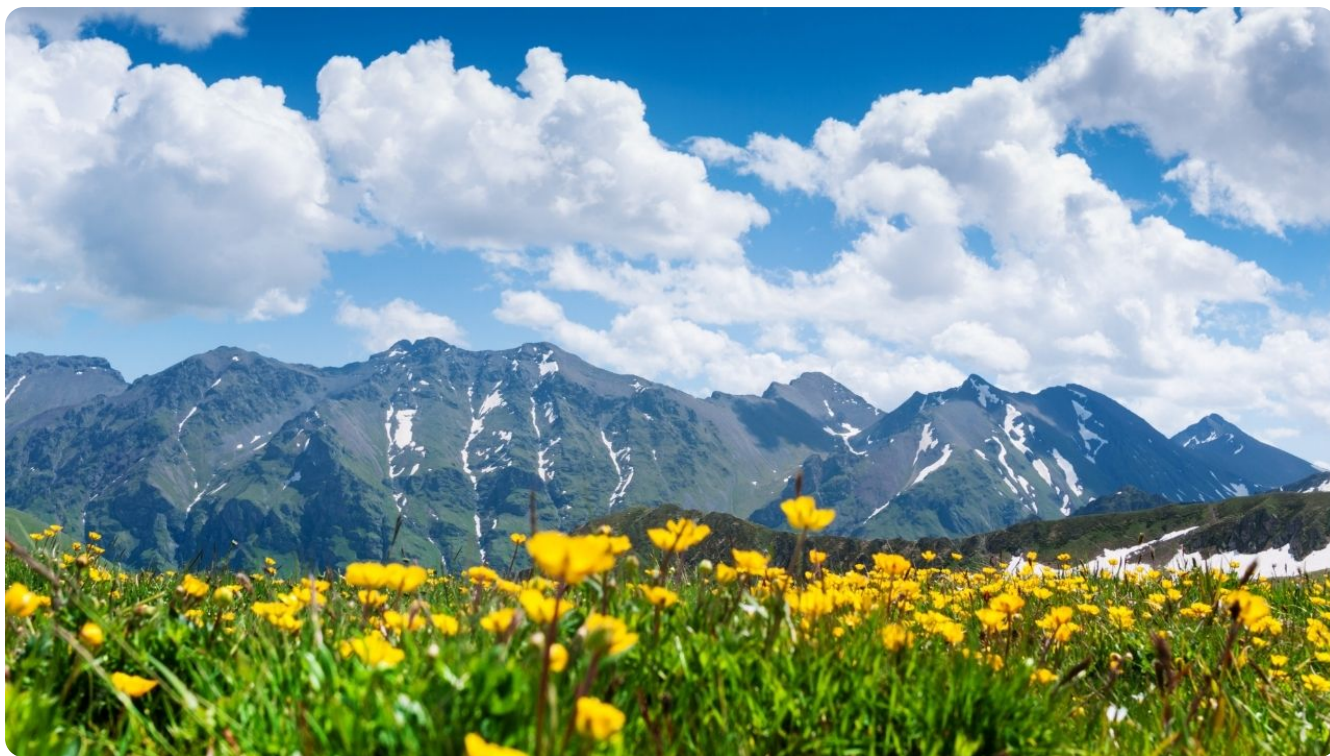
The truth revealed by Almighty God is clear. Everything that takes place in the universe occurs through God's knowledge, will, and creation. Not even a single leaf falls, not a single word is spoken, nor does a single movement occur except with God's knowledge. Everything comes into existence through His infinite knowledge, will, and power. Almighty God explains this truth in the Qur'an as follows:

“The keys of the Unseen are in His possession. No one knows them but Him. He knows everything in the land and sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it. There is no seed in the darkness of the ground, and nothing moist or dry that is not in a Clear Book.” (Surat al-An‘am, 59)

This is the truth upon which the believer must reflect deeply. Belief in God is not merely acknowledging His existence. True faith is to affirm with unwavering conviction in one's heart that God alone is the sole Creator, the Absolute Sovereign, and the true Owner of all that exists. The believer who grasps this truth does not deny causes; however, neither does he attribute to them any independent power. He knows that medicine, people, means, and circumstances are only the means that God has created. He lives without ever forgetting that every blessing, every outcome, and every event comes about by God's decree.

Associating Partners with God Means Disregarding God's Absolute Power

Associating partners with God does not always appear in the form of open disbelief. At times, it may imperceptibly find its way into a person's everyday speech, the way events are interpreted, and the thoughts that pass through the heart. For this reason, the believer examines not only his actions but also his thoughts, intentions, and perspective on events in the light of the criteria set forth in the Qur'an. In every situation, he never forgets that absolute power, true sovereignty, and creation belong to God alone.



Even Material Things Have a Destiny

At times, when evaluating the position or placement of objects, people may use expressions in daily life such as, **"If we had not put it there, it would not have broken,"** or, **"If we had been more careful, this would not have happened."** Certainly, human beings are responsible for taking precautions. Protecting one's belongings, acting carefully, and taking the necessary measures are requirements of reason and responsibility. However, the believer knows that both the precautions taken and the outcomes that follow occur by God's decree.

Ultimately, just as everything else has a destiny, material things also have a destiny. If it has been decreed that an object will break, then, by God's will, it will certainly happen. Causes are only the means that God has created. The believer knows that nothing possesses any independent power apart from God, and strives to perceive our Lord's sovereignty in every event.

Not Questioning Destiny by Saying "If Only"

At times, a person may think that events could have turned out differently by saying, "If that person had not said that, this would not have happened," or, "If only I had not gone there." Yet every event that takes place is part of the destiny that God decreed in eternity. Nothing that occurs takes place outside God's knowledge, will, and creation.

For this reason, rather than dwelling on "if only," the believer has faith that there is infinite wisdom in every judgment of God. He learns from what has happened, takes heed from his mistakes, and faces the future with trust in God.

Almighty God reveals:

“Say: ‘Nothing can happen to us except what God has ordained for us. He is Our Master. It is in God that the Muslims should put their trust.’” (Surat al-Tawba, 51)



The Mistaken Belief of Seeking Good Health in Causes

When considering matters related to health, a person may sometimes, without realizing it, fall into the mistake of attributing healing solely to causes. Expressions such as, "**The medicine cured me,**" "**The doctor saved me,**" or, "**Thanks to this treatment, I regained my health,**" may carry the danger of forgetting the true Giver of healing.

The One Who grants healing is God alone. If He wills, the same medicine becomes a means of healing for one patient; if He wills, it provides no benefit at all. If He wills, He makes the doctor a means of arriving at the correct diagnosis and treatment; if He wills, He brings the patient's appointed lifespan to its end. For it is God Who creates illness, good health, life, and death. He grants healing to whom He wills through His Name **Ash-Shafi (The Healer)**.

For this reason, the believer makes use of every available means for treatment; however, he places his trust not in the means themselves, but in God, Who created those means. He seeks healing from God alone, prays to Him, and asks Him to create what is best for him. For he knows that causes produce results only by God's will.

***"And when I am ill, it is He Who heals me."** (Surat ash-Shu'ara', 80)*

Anger and Anxiety Stem from a Lack of Submission to God

Traffic congestion, people's mistakes, unexpected developments, setbacks, or words that displease us... In life, we encounter many situations that appear outwardly negative. The believer knows that none of these can occur apart from God's knowledge and will. With this awareness, he submits himself completely to his Lord and preserves his calmness and moderation by trusting in the divine wisdom behind every event. For he knows that God alone is the One Who creates, decrees, and governs all things.

In contrast, a person who explains events solely by their apparent causes and attributes independent power and influence to those causes may easily become angry, fall into distress, and tend to blame those around him when faced with difficulties. Yet for the believer, causes are only the means that God has created; God alone is the true Maker and the Possessor of absolute will.

One who comprehends this truth chooses patience, trust in God, and good moral character rather than surrendering to anger. Thus, no matter how much outward circumstances may change, he is able to preserve the peace and balance within his heart.

Seeking Help from People

When faced with difficulties, people are naturally inclined to seek solutions first from other people. Yet no human being possesses any power or might independent of God. Certainly, a person makes use of the available means: he consults others, seeks help, receives support, takes the necessary steps, and fulfills the responsibilities incumbent upon him. However, he attaches his heart not to the means themselves, but to God, Who created those means. At times, people may also feel hurt, saddened, or begin to doubt another person's love because of that person's words or actions. Yet it is God alone Who turns hearts, creates love, and brings people together or separates them.

No human being possesses any independent power to benefit or harm another except by God's will. Therefore, in times of hardship, the believer first turns to his Lord, prays to Him, and knows that God alone is the true Provider of all help. Even while making use of the available means, he expects the outcome not from the means themselves but from God. For he knows that God alone is the One Who creates every means and grants help to His servants.

Our Lord reveals this truth as follows:

“If God afflicts you with harm, no one can remove it except Him. If He desires good for you, no one can avert His favour. He bestows it on whichever of His servants He wills. He is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Surah Yunus, 107)

Sorrow, Anxiety, and Fear of the Future

At times, a person may experience sorrow, anxiety, concern about the future, or fear of loss. This state of mind arises from forgetting that every event in life takes place through God's knowledge, will, and creation. Yet no affliction, no blessing, and no trial occurs outside God's decree.

When a person judges events solely by their apparent causes, anxiety and fear continue to increase. But when he realizes that everything is under God's control, he places his trust in his Lord, relying upon His infinite mercy and wisdom. He knows that God creates every one of His decrees with countless instances of wisdom and goodness. It is this submission that fills the believer's heart with peace.

Taking Ownership of One's Mistakes

A person may feel sorrow, remorse, and self-reproach because of the mistakes he has made. As long as this leads to sincere repentance, it is a praiseworthy quality. However, it is not right for a person to dwell continually on his mistakes, fall into despair, or regard himself as worthless. For it is God Who created both the human being and all that he does. Our Lord says:

“When God created both you and what you do.” (Surat as-Saffat, 96)

A person learns, matures, and turns to his Lord through making mistakes. Just as a child learns to walk by falling and getting up again, so too the believer learns from his mistakes, repents, and strives not to repeat the same error. Every sincere act of repentance may, by God's permission, become a means of spiritual growth and maturity.



Not Viewing Love as Independent of God

Love is a great blessing that God places in the human heart. Yet today, movies, television series, and popular culture often portray love as something independent of God and as an attachment placed at the very center of life. When a person makes the one he loves the center of his life and attributes to that person a value that belongs to God alone, he may, without realizing it, face the danger of turning love into an idol.

True love, however, is to love for the sake of God. The beauty, compassion, loyalty, faithfulness, and all the noble qualities seen in the one who is loved are blessings bestowed by God. The believer regards the person he loves as a trust from God; he expresses his love in a manner that is pleasing to God and hopes to be together with that person not only in this world but also in the Hereafter.

True love is the kind of love that brings a person closer to God, not one that distances him from God. Love for the sake of God gives rise to compassion, self-sacrifice, faithfulness, and kindness shown without expecting anything in return. This is the love that brings true peace to the heart.

Pride and the Inferiority Complex

A person may boast about the beauty, opportunities, position, wealth, success, or abilities he possesses, while at the same time regarding himself as worthless because of what he does not possess. In reality, these are two different manifestations of the same misconception. In fact, in both circumstances, the person regards what is given to or not given to him as a measure to weight his worth.

The truth is that the human being is a helpless servant created by God, constantly in need of His mercy and blessings. The beauty, abilities, material resources, positions, and successes a person possesses are not qualities acquired independently; they are blessings graciously bestowed by God. The believer who understands this truth does not become arrogant because of the blessings he has been given, nor does he consider himself deficient or worthless because of what he has not been given. For he knows that God alone is the true Owner of all beauty and all excellence.

A person's appearance, wealth, position, or knowledge does not make him truly superior. All of these are temporary and exist only by God's will. True worth and superiority lie in sincere striving to attain God's good pleasure and in **piety**.

Likewise, the believer does not regard the good qualities he possesses as the result of his own achievement. Rather, he sees them as blessings bestowed by God. He knows that his good character, abilities, knowledge, position, success, and every blessing he possesses are gifts from his Lord. God reminds us of this truth in the Qur'an as follows:

“Why, when you entered your garden, did you not say, “It is as God wills, there is no strength but in God”? Though you see me with less wealth and children than you possess.” (Surat al-Kahf, 39)

The Mistaken Belief That Good Moral Character Comes from Oneself

Patience, humility, generosity, compassion, self-sacrifice, sincerity, and all other noble qualities are precious blessings that God bestows upon His servants. When a person imagines that he has acquired these qualities solely through his own efforts, he may fail to recognize the divine favor that has been granted to him. It is God Who places patience in the human heart, instills compassion within it, and causes people to love faith and good moral character.

God informs in the Qur'an:

"Be patient. But your patience is only by God." (Surat an-Nahl, 127)

For this reason, the believer does not regard these qualities as independent virtues belonging to himself by saying, **"I am very patient,"** or, **"I am a self-sacrificing person."** Rather, he knows that every noble quality he possesses is a blessing bestowed by God, and he gives thanks to his Lord for it.

Good moral character should not lead a person to take pride in himself; rather, it should lead him to greater gratitude as he recognizes God's blessings upon him.

Attributing Blessings to Oneself

At times, without realizing it, a person may imagine that he has attained the blessings he possesses through his own strength. Yet every breath he takes, every sip of water he drinks, every morsel of food he eats, and every opportunity he enjoys is a blessing from God. It is God alone Who provides him with sustenance, gives strength to his body, creates the blessings he enjoys, and makes them available to him. A person can benefit only from the blessings that God has decreed for him.

"He Who gives me food and gives me drink." (Surat ash-Shu'ara, 79)

The believer knows that he is not the true owner of any of the blessings he possesses. He regards his wealth, health, time, abilities, and every opportunity as trusts that God has entrusted to him. This awareness leads a person to gratitude. For the believer knows that all praise and all thanks belong to God alone, the true Owner of every blessing.

Attributing Success Solely to Oneself

At times, a person may attribute the success he achieves to his own intelligence, hard work, or ability. Yet striving is the servant's responsibility; it is God alone Who creates success.

Being admitted to a university, earning high grades, succeeding in business, or attaining any goal comes about only by God's will. Likewise, there are times when a person works very hard yet does not achieve the result he desires, while at other times God opens doors that he never expected. In this way, the servant comes to understand more clearly that God alone is the One Who brings about the outcome.

For this reason, the believer strives and makes use of every lawful means; yet he attaches his heart not to success itself, but to God. When success comes, he gives thanks; when faced with hardship, he remains patient; and in every circumstance, he continues to place his trust in his Lord.



Conclusion

Associating partners with God is a grave danger to which every person must give the utmost attention throughout life. At times, without realizing it, a person may fall into the error of attributing God's absolute power and sovereignty to causes, people, or events. The believer who sincerely submits to God, however, knows that all power, all might, and all authority belong to God alone.

For this reason, a person should examine his heart and thoughts in the light of the criteria set forth in the Qur'an at every moment of his life. Many of the events experienced throughout the day may serve as tests of one's trust in God and devotion to Him. An illness, exhaustion, an unexpected hardship, hurtful words, an obstacle encountered, or the inability to attain a desired outcome... At such times, the believer must remain vigilant. For when a person judges events solely by their apparent causes, he may, without realizing it, overlook God's infinite wisdom and all-encompassing will. A perspective that questions destiny by asking, "Why did this happen?" and fails to perceive the divine wisdom behind events can weaken a person spiritually.

Yet in every event that God creates there is wisdom and goodness. At times, a hardship becomes the means by which a person turns more sincerely to God; at other times, a loss enables him to recognize his true blessings; and sometimes a trial strengthens his patience and submission. The believer knows that everything in his life, from the smallest detail to the greatest event, is created through God's infinite knowledge and mercy.

Forgetting this truth and attributing blessings to oneself, ascribing success solely to one's own abilities, or explaining events as the independent effects of causes leads a person into serious error. True peace is attained not by placing trust in causes, but by trusting in God, Who created those causes, and by submitting to His decree in every circumstance.

For this reason, the believer keeps his bond with God alive at every moment of his life. In every event he experiences, he turns to his Lord, trusts in His wisdom, and attaches his heart to God alone.

“What is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to God. God suffices as a Guardian.”
(*Surat an-Nisa'*, 132)

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