

## 7 REASONS WHY GOD IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP (PART 1 OF 6)

**Rating:**

**Description:** 7 reasons for why we must worship God and dedicate all acts of worship to Him alone. Part 1: Knowledge of God is essential to understanding why God is worthy of our worship.

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God makes it very clear that the purpose of our lives is to worship Him, "**And I did not create the jinn (spirit world) and mankind except to worship Me.**" (Quran 51:56). The concept of worship in the Islamic tradition is profound. Worship entails that we must know, love and obey God, as well as single out and dedicate all acts of worship to Him alone. If we want to know, love and obey something other than God the most, including direct acts of worship (like ultimate gratitude) to something other than Him, then that is our object of worship. In this sense, human beings, including those who do not believe in God, cannot not worship. However, many misdirect their worship to things other than God; something this essay aims to address.



According to the Islamic spiritual tradition, acts of worship are accepted if they fulfil two conditions. The first is that the act of worship should be done purely for the sake of God. The second is that the action itself is prescribed by the Islamic source texts: the Quran and the authentic Prophetic traditions. So a natural question that follows from this is: *What are these acts of worship?*

The acts of worship are many. Any good action that is done to please God is an act of worship. However, there are some basic acts of worship which are essential to Islamic spiritual practice. These have been summarised by the Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, as the five pillars of Islam. They include: affirming and recognising in one's heart that there is no deity worthy of worship except God and that Muhammad, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, is God's final messenger; praying five times a day; giving the obligatory charity if one can afford to; fasting in Ramadan (the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the Islamic calendar) and performing the

pilgrimage if one is able to do so. These acts of worship have profound meanings and inner dimensions. These are the basic pillars of Islam. However, in developing one's spiritual practice one can engage in a plethora of additional spiritual activities. These include: reciting the Quran; remembrance of God; removing the spiritual diseases in one's heart; voluntary charity; repentance; spiritual reflection; conveying the message of Islam to others; feeding the poor; spreading peace; taking care of animals; studying the life of the Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and blessings be upon him; memorising the Quran; the night prayer; reflecting on natural phenomena and much more.

Since our reason for being is to worship the Divine, it is important to understand why we must dedicate all acts of worship to Him alone. In this essay I will provide 7 reasons for why we must worship God and dedicate all acts of worship to Him alone. These reasons include:

1. God is worthy of worship by virtue of who He is.
2. God has created and sustains everything.
3. God provides us with innumerable favours.
4. If we love ourselves, we must love God.
5. God is The-Loving, and His love is the purest form of love.
6. Worship is part of who we are.
7. Obeying God is the most rational thing to do.

## Knowing God

Before I discuss the above reasons, it is important to elaborate on what is meant by knowing God. Knowledge of God is essential to understanding why God is worthy of our worship, because we cannot worship something we are ignorant of. This is why, in the Islamic tradition, traversing a path of knowing God is a form of worship:

***"So know, that there is no deity except God." (Quran 47:19)***

To know God means that we affirm that He is the sole creator and maintainer of everything that exists (known as *Oneness of God's Creativity*). It also entails that we affirm His names and attributes in the context of recognising that they are unique and that nothing can compare to God (known as *Oneness of God's Names and Attributes*). Knowledge of God also involves that we must know that He is unique in His Divinity; He alone is entitled to all acts of worship (known as *Oneness of God's Divinity*). It must be noted that in Islamic theology it is critical to affirm that nothing whatsoever shares in

God's creative power and ability, names and attributes, and Divinity. All forms of anthropomorphism are completely rejected. God is transcendent and maximally perfect. He has no imperfections. The concept of oneness in the Islamic spiritual tradition is referred to as *tawheed*, which linguistically means to affirm oneness or to make something one or unique.

## **Oneness of Creativity**

The oneness of God's Creativity is to affirm and recognise that God is the sole creator, master and owner of everything that exists. God is the One who sustains, takes care of, and nourishes everything. According to the Islamic doctrine of *tawheed*, anyone who denies this has associated partners with God, which is polytheism (known as *shirk* in Islamic theology). Anyone who believes that these descriptions of God can be shared by any created thing has deified that thing. Therefore, they have associated partners with God.

## **Oneness of God's Names and Attributes**

The 'oneness of God's names and attributes' means to describe God only by the names and attributes by which He has described Himself, which are found in the Quran and the Prophetic teachings (some names such as *Al-Khaaliq*, The-Creator, and *Al-Qadeer*, The-Powerful, can be affirmed by a sound rational mind). These names and attributes, such as The-Loving and The-Subtle, are affirmed but they are not comparable to creation. God's names and attributes are perfect without any deficiency or flaw, God is maximally perfect. God's names are described by God Himself as the most beautiful:

***"The most beautiful names belong to God: so call on Him by them." (Quran 7:180)***

The one who compares these names and attributes to creation has committed humanisation, and therefore has associated partners with God. The one who compares any created thing to God has committed deification, which is also a form of associating partners with God.

## **Oneness of God's Divinity**

The oneness of God's Divinity is that we must affirm that all acts of worship must be directed to Him alone. Someone who directs acts of worship to anything other than God, and the one who seeks reward from anything other than God in any act of worship, has associated partners with Him.

In certain contexts some acts of obedience, if directed to other than God, do not constitute associating partners with Him. For example, one's love for God may be deficient and require perfecting. Associating partners with God in the context of love would involve loving something or someone instead of God or as much as God. Someone can love their family and it would not constitute associating partners with God. If they loved their family instead of God or as much as God, then that would

constitute a form of associating partners with Him.

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