

﴿so do not set up rivals to Allah﴾ that is, equals from among His creation which you worship as you should worship Allah and love as you should love Allah, although they are created beings like you who receive provision and are under His control, having not the slightest power either in heaven or on earth, and they cannot benefit or harm you at all.

﴿when you know better﴾ that is, when you know that Allah has no partner or equal with regard to the power of creation, granting of provision or control of the universe, and He has no partner in worship. So how can you worship other gods besides Him when you know these things? This is something that is very strange and extremely foolish.

This verse combines the command to worship Allah alone and the prohibition on worshipping anything other than Him. It offers clear evidence that it is obligatory to worship Him and that the worship of anything other than Him is invalid. This refers to *tawheed ar-ruboobiyah* (oneness of the divine Lordship), which implies that He is the only One Who creates, grants provision and controls. If anyone accepts that He has no partner in these things, then by the same token he should also accept that Allah has no partner in worship. This is the clearest rational evidence for the oneness of the Creator and the invalidity of associating partners with Him.

The words ﴿that you may become pious﴾ may be understood as meaning that if you worship Allah alone, then you will avoid His wrath and punishment, because you have taken measures to ward that off from yourselves. Or it may mean that if you worship Allah (alone), you will become one of the pious who are described as fearing Allah. Both meanings are sound and complement one another. The one who worships Allah properly is one of the pious, and whoever is pious will be saved from the wrath and punishment of Allah (﴿﴾).