

The meaning of ar Rabb

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Taken from the works of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With regards to the meaning of ar Rabb, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹ states:

Rabb – meaning khaaliq (Creator) and Sovereign Owner and the One who controls; so He is the One who created the heavens and the Earth; and He is the One who owns the heavens and the Earth; and He is the One who controls the heavens and the Earth.

He, the Most High, said:

Certainly creation and command are His alone.

[Soorah al A'raaf (the 7th chapter) aayah 54]

And this is His being unique with regards to His creating and His controlling.

And He, the Most High, said:

And to Allaah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the Earth.

[Soorah al Jaathiyah (the 45th chapter) aayah 27]

And this is His being unique in terms of sovereignty.

(And His saying):

Rabb il 'aalameen (Lord of all creation)

[Soorah as Saaffaat (the 37th chapter) aayah 182]

Meaning: their Creator and their Sovereign Owner and the One who controls their affairs.

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

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And an 'aalam is: everything other than Allaah. And they are called 'aalam because they are a sign for their Creator. So in everything from the created things of Allaah, there is a sign proving His Oneness and His Perfection.

(And His saying)

Rabb il 'izzah (power and might)
[Soorah as Saaffaat (the 37th chapter) aayah 180]

Meaning: ghalabah (supremacy).

And rabb here has the meaning of 'one who possesses' (something) and its meaning is not 'creator'.

And it occurs in the Qur'aan with the meaning of Creator and Sovereign Owner and One who controls – except in this place; so the intent here is 'one who possesses' only. And it is not possible that it be with the meaning of 'creator' (here) since al 'izzah (power and might) is one of the Attributes of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic; and the Attributes of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic are not created.

So it is a must that the intent behind 'rabb' in His saying "rabb il 'izzah" is the One who possesses power and strength, and not Creator (of 'izzah) since the Attributes of the Rabb are not created.

(Tafseer Soorah as Saaffaat of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (رَحْمَةُ اللهِ), quoted in Mu'jam at Ta'reefaat p200)