

Names and Attributes of Allah

Many names and attributes of Allah have been mentioned in the Qur'an.

"He is Allah, besides whom there is no god. He has knowledge of everything, whether perceptible or imperceptible. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is Allah, besides whom there is no god, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the Giver of peace, the Keeper of faith, the Supreme, the Mighty one, the All powerful and the Majestic. Exalted be He above what they associate with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth gives glory to Him. He is the Mighty, the Wise". (Surah al-Hashr, 59:22 – 24).

"His are the most beautiful names".

The main feature of the names and the attributes of Allah has been mentioned in this verse. The highest degree of every virtue and every excellence belongs to Allah. For example, power and ability to do things is a good quality. Allah is the most powerful and the most efficient and can do anything. The Qur'an says:

"Surely Allah can do all things". (Surah al-Ankabut, 29:20).

Knowledge is a virtue. Allah has the highest degree of knowledge.

"Allah is aware of all things ". (Surah al-Tawbah, 9:115).

"He is the Knower of the invisible and the visible. . . ". (Surah al-R'ad, 13:9).

Sagacity is another virtue. The holy Qur'an says:

"Allah is Knower, Wise". (Surahal-Mumtahanah, 60:10).

Kindness to others is a good quality. Allah is

"the Beneficent, the Merciful". "He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy". (Surah al-Hamd, 1:3; Surah Yusuf, 12:64).

Hence you are at liberty to call Him by any of these most beautiful names:

"Call Him Allah or Rahman (Beneficent). It is the same whichever you call. His are the most beautiful names". (Surah al-Isra, 17:110). "Allah has the beautiful names. Invoke Him by them, and keep away from those who prevent them. They shall soon be repaid for what they do ". (Surah al-A'raf, 7:180).

Allah is Independent

As Allah has the highest degree of every kind of virtue and perfection, He is naturally free from every fault, defect and deficiency. A number of the Qur'anic verses, extolling Allah, emphasize this aspect of His glory.

The Qur'an declares Allah to be free from every kind of deficiency and need. It regards this freedom as an important principle of the cognizance of Allah, by means of which a number of doctrinal and ideological deviations which have taken birth regarding Allah may be detected.

'Musa said to his people: If you and all those who are on the earth prove to be ungrateful, Allah does not at all need your thanks. He is Laudable". (Surah Ibrahim, 14:8).

Man should remember that because of Allah not being in want of anything, He is not in need of our faith, worship and obedience. If He wants us to be faithful and obedient, that is for our own benefit and not for His. If the whole world becomes unbeliever, that cannot do Him the least harm.

Not being subject to any need, Allah is free from the limitations of time and space. He is above them. A being who occupies space, naturally needs it to exist, and one who is confined to time, can exist only under certain conditions at a particular time. A being not time-bound can always exist and is not dependent upon the special conditions of time.

Allah is All-knowing

The Creator of the world knows everything. So far as we are concerned there are two kinds of things in the universe viz. open and hidden, perceptible and imperceptible.

However Allah is aware of both of them. On principle there is nothing unknown to Him. Nothing is hidden from Him.

"He is the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Supreme the Most High". (Surah al-Ra'd, 13:9).

"Nothing in the earth or in the heavens is hidden from Allah ". (Surah Ale Imran, 3: 5).

He is aware of the minutest details. He knows all that we do.

"Surely Allah knows all that you do" . (Surah al-Nahl, 16:91).

Allah is All-powerful

He controls everything and can do anything.

"Surely Allah can do everything". (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:20).

He is so powerful and dominating that whenever He wants a thing to come into existence or wants something to be done, He simply says: *"Be!"* and immediately it *will 'be'*. The Qur'an says:

"His command, when He decrees a thing, is to say to it: 'Be' and it is". (Surah Yasin, 36:82).

Will and Volition of Allah

Normally all beings endowed with intelligence and power can achieve all or at least a part of what they intend. They at least try to fulfill their desires. When we knowingly plan to achieve our object we say that "we are determined to accomplish such and such task". Hence, determination consists of an intentional and strong will which is effective in the achievement of our desire.

Out of all the multifarious things existing in this world, the animals or at least the advanced animals are more or less endowed with this quality that when they feel an urge, they try knowingly to fulfill what they want. Out of all the animals known to us man has the most developed willpower. That is why knowledge has a more creative role in his life than in the life of other animals. Anyhow, he apparently does not exercise his will while performing many acts. His circulatory, respiratory and digestive system and his big and small glands which produce the necessary chemicals, all work without the aid of his will.

There is no doubt that all these systems are connected with the nervous system, and modern physiology has been able to discover for each of them a centre of command in some part of the brain, still every act

having some connection with brain cannot be called intentional and deliberate.

It has been reported that some persons consequent on certain exercises and long practice have been able to control the circulation of their blood. Even if such reports be true, they can at best be described as exceptional cases.

Anyhow, the field of the activity of man's will is after all limited. For example, so far his will has not been able to influence the rotatory system of the heavenly bodies. We also see that every human being has some hereditary traits in the selection of which his conscious will has no part to play.

Hence, the influence of human will and volition is after all limited. That is why it often happens that man intends to do a thing, but he does not succeed, or certain factors beyond his control prevent the fulfillment of his many desires. But Allah who is All-knowing and All-powerful, accomplishes all that He wants.

"Surely, Your Lord does what He pleases". (Surah Hud, 11:107).

"Only Allah can bring punishment on you, if He will, and you cannot frustrate His plan ". (Sura Hud, 11:3 3) .

His will rules over the whole world, but that is not the case with that of others.

"Allah will judge with fairness, and those whom they invoke besides Him can judge nothing". (Surah Mu'min, 40:20).

All others whosoever and whatsoever they may be, move within a limited framework decreed for them by Allah, who has destined everything.

"Allah has set a measure for everything ". (Surah al-Talaq, 65: 3 etc.)

This is the universal law which applies to man also. As such his power is limited, but still he can choose his way of life within the framework ordained for him. Allah wants him to use his discretion and determine his future, whether good or bad, himself. Anyhow, even within this framework man, or for that matter any other being, should not consider himself to be in possession of absolute power. If Allah wants, He can make his efforts ineffectual.

There are many cases in which He frustrated the efforts of some conceited individuals or groups against all their expectations to remind them and others that even within their own sphere of power they should never be oblivious of the Divine power which controls everything.

The Qur'an mentions several examples of such a situation. The Surah al-Qalam, 68:17 – 32 illustrate

this point.

"We have tried them as We tried the owners of the garden when they vowed that they would pluck its fruit next morning. But they made no exception for the will of Allah. As a result a visitation from your Lord visited their garden while they were sleeping. And in the morning it was as if it had been plucked. They called out to one another in the morning saying: Rush to your garden if you want to pluck the fruit. So they set out, saying to each other in low tones: No poor shall enter the garden today without your permission. They set out early determined to stop the poor. When they saw the garden, they exclaimed: Surely we were wrong. In fact we have been ruined. The best among them said: Did I not tell you: Why do you not glorify Allah? Then they said: Gloried be our Lord. No doubt we have been wrong-doers. Then they began to blame one another. They said: Alas for us! Surely we were outrageous. We hope that our Lord will give us better garden in its place. To our Lord we humbly turn".

Allah is Beneficent and Forgiving

Allah is Beneficent and Merciful to all His creation. He has bestowed endless bounties on all. He has provided all of us with ample opportunities to pass our life. He is Forgiving.

If a sinner repents and wants to adopt the way of virtue, the door is not closed to him, provided he is earnest in doing that.

Throughout the world there are innumerable signs of the mercy of Allah. Like all other existing things man also enjoys the Divine blessings, but with one important difference. He has been blessed with the special favor of being the master of his destiny. He is endowed with the power of distinguishing between right and wrong and good and bad, and is able to choose consciously either of them. He can exercise this power only if it is admitted that some of his actions are desirable and rewarding and some others leading to pain and punishment.

The anxiety for not losing the reward of desirable acts and for escaping the punishment of undesirable ones is a Divine blessing in itself, for it impels man to be virtuous and upright. The Qur'an has repeatedly warned against the wrath of Allah.

Allah is just

Allah does not do injustice to anyone. He wants us also to be just in our behavior. He has created everything according to a plan. The whole world is homogeneous. He has organized recompense and

retribution in the next world, according to a well-planned system of action and reaction. Everyone will reap there what he has sown here. There, the personality of man will be a reflection of his performance here. Whatever comfort or pain he receives in the Hereafter will be the exact outcome of his own deeds, and no injustice will be done to anyone. The everlasting future of everybody depends upon his own efforts to improve himself and his environment.

This is the gist of the information which the Qur'an, the divine Book, gives us about Allah. This information is based on revelation, but it can also be obtained through pondering over His signs, and His names and attributes. It not only as far as possible satisfies those who seek cognition, but also helps us to solve the biggest problem of giving a direction to our life.

A man inspired by such realistic and constructive knowledge of Allah leads a vigorous life full of zeal, hope and effort. He adheres to his own views and his own way of life, but co-operates with others and respects their ideas also. A man bound to Allah neither sells himself to others nor does he endeavour to subdue them to his own wish. He loves his own freedom as well as that of others. He himself is pure and likes others to be pure. He seeks truth wherever he finds it. He is always with truth and at war with falsehood.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/philosophy-islam-sayyid-muhammad-husayni-beheshti-muhammad-jawad-bahonar/names-and-attributes-allah#comment-0>