

The Beautiful And Lofty Names Of Allāh

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

Class 1

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Introduction To The Beautiful Names Of Allāh

Learning the Names of Allāh is From the Greatest Of Knowledge and From The Greatest Means of Increasing Īmān:

This series is about **Al-Asmā' Allāh Al-Ḥusnā (The Most Beautiful Names of Allāh)**, a personal compilation by Shaykh Abū Ḥakīm (حفظه الله) which he is still in the process of making. The names of Allāh are still being compiled and the aqwāl (statements) of the people of knowledge concerning these names are still being collected. This work focuses on the meanings behind the names of Allāh (عز وجل) and their effect upon the creation and upon Īmān. Even though some will be addressed in this session, the focus here is not on the principles around these names as seen in works like Al-Qawā'id al-Muthlá.

No doubt, the topic of the names of Allāh (عز وجل) is from the **greatest of topics and from the greatest means that causes an increase in the Īmān of the servant**. It is the knowledge of the greatest ma'lūm, the greatest thing that anyone can have knowledge of. The reality is that as believers, we do not know Allāh (عز وجل) the way we should know Him. Allāh has revealed to us Asmā' wa Aṣ-Ṣifāt and when acquainted

with them, it increases our knowledge of Allāh (عز وجل) and it increases our closeness and our love for Him.

Statements Of The People Of Knowledge Concerning Al-Asmā' Wa As-Sifāt:

1. Ibn Al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) in His Book Badā'ī' al-Fawā'id Shows How Everything Created Returns to The Names of Allāh (عز وجل):

Ibn Al-Qayyim has two books with the title Al-Fawā'id: '*Al-Fawā'id*' which is well known and '*Badā'ī' al-Fawā'id*' which occurs in two volumes and is filled with benefits, many of which are related to language and ḥadīth and other fawā'id. Imām Ibn Al-Qayyim mentions in his book, '*Badā'ī' al-Fawā'id*' that **knowledge of these names is the origin of every science and is encompassed in every type of 'ilm**. He says that **every knowledge is either something that Allāh (عز وجل) created or something that He commanded, and it all returns to the names of Allāh (عز وجل) like cause and effect.**

The names of Allāh (عز وجل) is **the foundation upon which all knowledge is built on**. In essence, there is nothing that exists in the creation except that it returns back to the names of Allāh in some way – there is not a situation, not a command of Allāh, not a creation except that it returns back to the names of Allāh. Therefore, this is from the branches of knowledge that we must spend great time upon, and we must understand. The one who understands this, increases in his īmān and increases in his nearness to Allāh (عز وجل).

2. Imām al-Asfahānī (رحمه الله) in his Book Al-Hujjah fī Bayān al-Mahajjah Shows The Importance of Learning About Allāh:

Imām al-Asfahānī, also known as Qawām al-Sunnah, mentions in his book that **the first obligation that Allāh (عز وجل) has imposed upon his creation is to have knowledge of Him, because when the people truly know Allāh, then they will worship Him**. He (رحمه الله) said that it is incumbent upon the Muslims to learn Allāh's names and their meanings so that they may glorify Him as He truly deserves. Reflect on the meanings of

His names: Aş-Şamad, Al-Karīm, At-Tawwāb for e.g. How well do you know them?
Could you speak about them for 5 or 10 minutes?

Imām al-Asfahānī shows the importance people give to knowing one's name and lineage or even tribe when performing transactions with each other, especially as is seen in the Arab lands. If people see the importance of investigating one another and doing their background research, then far more deserving of this type of investigation is researching the names and attributes of Allāh (عز وجل) and learning about Him.

3. Ibn Al-Qayyim (رحمه الله) in His Poem 'Al-Shāfiyat Al-Kāfiyya' Shows The Beauty of Knowing Allāh:

He says that **an indication that Allāh (عز وجل) wants good for an individual is by honouring His servant with knowledge of Him**, and uniting his heart in loving Him. He adds that he does not just take knowledge from anyone but from “the lantern of revelation” – Qur'ān and Sunnah. When any of these attributes reaches him, he accepts it with submission, he receives it with contentment and he surrenders and yields to it in humble obedience. Thereby, his heart is illuminated and his chest is expanded and he is filled with joy and love.

He says that **when the servant is guided to a knowledge of Allāh's names, Allāh (عز وجل) is introducing Himself to that servant – He is informing him of Himself through the tongue of His messenger (ﷺ)**. He (عز وجل) then places that attribute in his heart. His joy intensifies, his knowledge strengthens, his soul finds tranquility and his heart attains serenity. He continues that there is no need of the soul greater than the need to know its Creator and Originator, to love Him, to remember Him, to rejoice in Him, and to draw near to Him.

Note that there is no path to this except through knowing His attributes and names. **The more a servant knows the names of Allāh (عز وجل), the more he knows Him and draws close to Him.** Conversely, the more he denies them, the more he is averse to Him and the further he becomes from Him. The Shaykh (رحمه الله) concludes that **Allāh**

(عز وجل) places the servant in relation to himself precisely where the servant places himself in relation to Allāh (عز وجل). This in turn will highlight to us the importance of making Allāh (عز وجل) Azza wa Jal the most important thing in our lives.

Common Misconception That Allāh's Names Are Limited To 99 Names:

It is not possible for us to encompass the names of Allāh (عز وجل). A common misconception is that Allāh (عز وجل) has 99 names as occurs in the ḥadīth of Abū Huraira where the Prophet (ﷺ) said, **“Indeed Allāh has 99 names, 100 except one, whomsoever encompasses them will enter Jannah.”** This Ḥadīth is not establishing the fact that Allāh (عز وجل) only has 99 names. Rather, from those names, there are 99 which if a person encompasses them, he will enter Jannah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) used to supplicate, **“O Allāh I ask You by every Name that is Yours, with which You have named Yourself, or which You revealed in Your Book, or You taught to any one of Your creation, or You have kept with Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen...”**

This indicates that there are names that Allāh (عز وجل) has kept to Himself and have not revealed to His creation. Since that is the case, we understand then that **the names of Allāh (عز وجل) are not restricted to 99**. Similarly, in the Qur'ān alone there are 109/110 names or more, just in the Qur'ān alone. Then there are names in the Sunnah. Therefore, how could it possibly be said that the names of Allāh (عز وجل) are restricted to 99? Rather, **the names of Allāh (عز وجل) are greater than 99**.

4. Shaykh Al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah Discusses The Effect of The Names of Allāh (عز وجل) Azza wa Jal in His Book, ‘Sharh al-‘Aqīdah al-Isfahāniyyah’:

He gives the examples of Al-Murīd (The One Who Intends) and Al-Mutakallim (The One Who Speaks). He says that even though their meanings are correct as Allāh (عز وجل) intends and speaks, they cannot be ascribed as names of Allāh (عز وجل) because they have not occurred in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah. **It is not permissible for us to name Allāh (عز وجل) by a name that He has not referred to Himself with.**

Conditions For A Name To Be Considered As A Name of Allāh:

This brings us to the following section within the book, and that is the establishment of the names of Allāh (عز وجل). What do we mean when we say this is a name of Allāh? For it to be referred to as being from the names of Allāh (عز وجل), it must fulfill a number of conditions:

1. The name must be established textually (Qur'ān or Sunnah). It must be established with an Isnād that is ṣaḥīḥ. Eg. in the ḥadīth of the 99 names, there is a version of that ḥadīth that occurs in the Sunnah of Imām al-Tirmidhi that mentions those names. The version is not authentic because of the presence of several dubious narrators. One such narrator is Walīd ibn Muslim who is well known for what is known as Tadrīs al-Taswīyah.

Tadrīs Taswīyah occurs when a person narrates a ḥadīth from a person who is weak but omits its mention. He bypasses the mention of this individual and mentions the trustworthy person after him. This is the worst type of tadrīs which leads to weakness in a ḥadīth.

Likewise, in this chain of narration is an individual known as 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣan'ānī who is known for fabricating ḥadīth and an individual known as 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Ḥusayn who is known to be abandoned by the scholars of Ḥadīth. Therefore, the scholars have striven to try to come to a conclusion as to what those names are.

2. The name must be established as a name linguistically. The name must indicate a title, and that it must be something that is understood linguistically to be a title. Such would be the case if it comes from The Book and the Sunnah.

3. The name must be mentioned in an absolute and unrestricted manner and not attributed to something else. For example, referring to Allāh (عز وجل) as Al-Mākir - The One Who Plots. Allāh (عز وجل) refers to Himself using this attribute of plotting. He says,

”إِنَّهُمْ يَكِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ۖ وَأَكِيدُ كَيْدًا“

“Verily, they are but plotting a plot (against you O Muḥammad ﷺ). And I (too) am plotting a plot.”

[Sūrah Aṭ-Ṭāriq; 86:15-17]

Here we see that Allāh (عز وجل) devises plots but this is not mentioned unrestrictedly. Therefore, it is not permissible to refer to Allāh (عز وجل) as Al-Mākir because Allāh (عز وجل) plots against certain individuals and specific situations and not generally.

4. The name should incorporate and comprise an attribute. Eg. Allāh is Al-Ḥakīm - The All-Wise. Within that name there is the attribute of ḥikmah (wisdom). Here we have a name and an attribute. This is so with all of the names of Allāh (عز وجل). They are Asmā' un wa Awṣāf - names and attributes.

Another example is Allāh (عز وجل) is Ar-Raḥīm - The Mercy Giver, within which is the attribute of raḥmah (mercy). Every name has within it an attribute.

5. The name must indicate complete perfection. We must be extremely careful when we are saying that this is a name of Allāh and what is oftentimes done is that authors oftentimes convert verbs or actions of Allāh into names. For example, Allāh says,

“وَأَنَّهُ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى”

“And it is He Who Gives life to the dead...”

[Sūrah Al-Ḥajj; 22:6]

This is an action of Allāh. It is not permissible for us to now convert it into a name and say Allāh (عز وجل) is Al-Muḥyī, The One Who Gives Life. Similarly, Allāh (عز وجل) is Al-Mumīt – The Causer of Death. It is not permissible for us to take that action of Allāh (عز وجل) and convert it into a name because Allāh did not refer to Himself as Al-Mumīt. **We only take the name that Allāh (عز وجل) has referred to Himself as.** Those names have complete perfection within them. Is Allāh pleased with it being converted into a name? It is just like if we have, for example, an individual with the name Muḥammad Khan and he is a blacksmith. Because of this, we decide to refer to him as Hammering

Khan because hammering is from the actions of the blacksmiths. He may not be pleased with us referring to him as Hammering Khan.

Look at the prospects if we were to take every action of Allāh (عز وجل) and turn it into a name. There would be no limit. Another example is that Allāh (عز وجل) is the one that destroys. Can we call Him The Destroyer? Allāh (عز وجل) mentioned concerning Nūḥ that He carried him upon a ship made of planks and nails. Can we now refer to Allāh (عز وجل) as The Carrier? Allāh (عز وجل) has transformed individuals from Banī Isrā'īl into monkeys and pigs as occurs in Sūrah al-Baqarah. Can we now refer to Allāh as The Transformer?

Each Name From The Names of Allāh Falls Into One of Two Categories:

Each name can either have a title and an attribute or a title, an attribute and an effect upon the creation. From the names of Allāh (عز وجل) are those that refer to Allāh and His essence and the attribute that is present within it that relates to His essence. However, we do not know of an effect that the attribute has upon His creation. An example of such a name with just a title and attribute is Al-Quddūs, The Pure and Perfect with the attributes of purity and perfection of Allāh (عز وجل).

An example of a name and attribute with an effect on the creation is Ar-Raḥīm, The Bestower of Mercy. Within this name is the attribute of raḥmah (mercy). From the effects of the name upon his creation is that Allāh (عز وجل) shows mercy to His creation. And so **not every name has an effect directly upon the creation.**

In this Series We Will Be Looking At:

- the name itself linguistically
- its meaning as it relates to Allāh (عز وجل)
- the statements of the scholars concerning the name
- the effect of the name upon His creation
- the effect of that name upon the īmān of the servant – how it affects us as Muslims, how it affects how we interact with the creation of Allāh for example

how we interact with the Muslim, the non-Muslim, the animals etc. How does it affect how we look upon the decree of Allāh (عز وجل).

وصلی اللہ علی نبینا محمد وعلی آلہ وصحبہ وسلم

