

In the Name of Allah, The Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Creed-Islamic Creed- Lesson (18-63)- The Most Beautiful Names of Allah: The Greatest Name of Allah

The evidence that "Allah" is the Greatest Name of Allah:

1-The special status of this Name among His other Names

Dear brother, the Greatest among the Names of Allah is "Allah", and this issue has been the object of much research. Actually, scholars of tawheed determine that this Name is the proper noun for the Divine Essence or for the One Whose Existence is Necessary, and that this Name is the Greatest. They presented the following proofs for that: The first proof: No one has ever been called by this Name except Allah. The Arabs used to call their idols "gods" (alihah); they used the Name "Allah" while calling on Allah the Almighty. The evidence is provided in the noble ayah below in which Allah the Almighty says:

"If you were to ask them: "Who has created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon?" They will surely reply: "Allah." How then are they deviating (as polytheists and disbelievers)?

(Al-Ankabut, 61)

Hence, by the word "Allah" they meant the Creator of the heavens and the earth and no one else on earth was called by this Name, not even their so-called "gods". Allah the Almighty says:

"Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, so worship Him (Alone) and be constant and patient in His worship. Do you know of any who is similar to Him? (of course none is similar or coequal or comparable to Him, and He has none as

partner with Him). [There is nothing like unto Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer]."

(Maryam, 65)

Thus, this Name belongs exclusively to Allah and should be considered the Noblest among His Names. It is the Greatest Name of Allah which encompasses all of the Most Beautiful Names and the Most Exalted Attributes, all aspects of Perfection, being far above any sort of deficiency –the proper noun for the Divine Essence Whose Existence is Necessary.

2-"Allah" is the fundamental Name

The second proof that "Allah" is the Greatest Name is that it is the fundamental Name and all the sh3er, such as the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, the King, the Holy One, the One Free from all Defects, the Giver of Security, the Watcher over His creatures, the All-Mighty, the Compeller, and all the sh3er appertain to It. Allah the Almighty says:

"And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do."

(Al-Araf, 180)

So, the Most Beautiful Names of Allah are contained in the Name "Allah". Clearly, the noun which is followed by an adjective is more important than the adjective itself and we say that the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, the King, the Holy One, etc. are the Most Beautiful Names of Allah. We do not say that "Allah" is the Beautiful Name of the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. Consequently, the Name "Allah" is the fundamental Name among His other Names.

I want to clarify for you another point here. Allah the Almighty says:

"Say (O Muhammad): "Invoke Allah or invoke the Most Beneficent (Allah), by whatever Name you invoke Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names. And offer your Salat (prayer) neither aloud nor in a low voice, but follow a way between."

(Al-Isra, 110)

Allah the Almighty mentions here these two Names in particular, saying:

"Say (O Muhammad): "Invoke Allah or invoke the Most Beneficent (Allah),"

(Al-Isra,110)

This indicates that those are the Most Honorable Names. Furthermore, the Name "Allah" is more honorable than the Name "the Most Beneficent" because it is mentioned first. Allah the Almighty says:

"Say (O Muhammad): "Invoke Allah or invoke the Most Beneficent (Allah),"

(Al-Isra, 110)

The Name "the Most Beneficent" shows the Absolute Mercy, but it does not indicate the Absolute Irresistibility, Dominion, Greatness, Holiness, and Glory, while the Name "Allah" encompasses all these meanings. It is the Greatest Name, the proper noun for the Divine Essence which comprises all the Beautiful Names.

One of the wonders of the Name "Allah" is that if one of Its letters is dropped, the word remains one of the Names of Allah, something that cannot be said of the other Names. For instance, when you drop the first letter (the hamzah), the word becomes (lillah) which means ("for Allah" or "to Him belong"). Allah the Almighty says:

"They are the ones who say: "Spend not on those who are with Allah's Messenger, until they desert him." And to Allah belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites comprehend not."

(Al-Imran, 189)

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(Al-Munafiqun, 7)

While when you drop the second letter (letter "l", lam in Arabic) the word becomes (ilah) which means "God", and it is also one of the Attributes of Allah the Almighty. He says:

"To Him belong the keys of the heavens and the earth. And those who disbelieve in the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, signs, revelations, etc.) of Allah, such are they who will be the losers."

(Az-Zumar, 63)

"And He is Allah. La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). His is all praise, in the first (i.e. in this world) and in the last (i.e. in the Hereafter). And for Him is the Decision, and to Him shall you (all) be returned."

(Al-Qasas, 70)

When you drop the other 'lam', the word becomes 'hu' (He) which is the pronoun for the Divine Essence. Allah the Almighty says:

"Say (O Muhammad): "He is Allah, (the) One. * "Allah-us-Samad (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, He neither eats nor drinks). * "He begets not, nor was He begotten; * "And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him."

(Al-Ikhlâs, 1-4)

Thus, the omission of the first letter (the hamzah) turns the word into 'lillah' ("to Him belong"). The omission of the hamzah and the first 'lam' turns the word into 'ilah' (God); whereas the omission of the hamzah, the first and the second lam turns the word into 'hu' (He), which is the pronoun for the Divine Essence. This is one of the characteristics of this Great Name.

However, if a disbeliever says: "There is no god but He," he has not yet embraced Islam. Instead, he should say "there is no god but Allah" because in the first statement he may mean an idol. Thus, it is necessary to say "there is no god but Allah". In conclusion, "Allah" is the proper noun for the Divine Essence and the Greatest Name of Allah. Allah the Almighty says:

"So know (O Muhammad) that La ilaha ill-Allah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), and ask forgiveness for your sin, and also for (the sin of) believing men and believing women. And Allah knows well your moving about, and your place of rest (in your homes)."

(Muhammad, 19)

Allah the Almighty does not say "none has the right to be worshipped but He". Instead, He says:

"So know (O Muhammad) that La ilaha ill-Allah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah),"

(Muhammad, 19)

Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, reported: The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, so if they do that, then their lives and properties are safe from me, except insofar as they are subject to Islamic laws, and then their reckoning will be with Allah."

(Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

3-The Holiness and the Glory of this Name

The third proof that the word "Allah" is the Greatest Name of Allah is in the following noble ayah in which Allah the Almighty says:

"They (the Jews, Quraish pagans, idolaters, etc.) did not estimate Allah with an estimation due to Him when they said: "Nothing did Allah send down to any human being (by inspiration)." Say (O Muhammad): "Who then sent down the Book which Musa (Moses) brought, a light and guidance to mankind which you (the Jews) have made into (separate) paper sheets, disclosing (some of it) and concealing (much). And you (believers in Allah and His Messenger Muhammad), were taught (through the Quran) that which neither you nor your fathers knew." Say: "Allah (sent it down)." Then leave them to play in their vain discussions."

(Al-An'am, 91)

Here, Allah the Almighty orders His servant (the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to turn away from everything other than Allah and to devote himself totally to worshipping Allah, mentioning His Name "Allah", which shows that this Name is the Noblest. Accordingly, all vain discussions about this worldly life, debates, arguments, wrangles, whims, self-interests, attitudes and discord should be abandoned as Allah the Almighty says:

Say: "Allah (sent it down)." Then leave them to play in their vain discussions."

(Al-An 'am, 91)

The above implies that everything other than Allah is falsehood. Allah the Almighty says:

Say: "Allah (sent it down)." Then leave them to play in their vain discussions."

(Al-An 'am, 91)

And He also says:

"So put your trust in Allah; surely, you (O Muhammad) are on manifest truth."

(An-Naml, 79)

One of the characteristics of this Name, the Greatest Name of the Divine Essence, is that when you use 'ya al-nida', the vocative form, with all the other Names of Allah, you drop the definite article. You say thus Ya Rahman (O Most Gracious!), Ya Rahim (O Most Merciful!) and so forth. The definite article is dropped, except for the Great Name "Allah". Thus, you say Ya Allah! So the definite article becomes part of this Great Name of Allah, which indicates that this Name does not need identification. The definite article is never dropped from this Great Name of Allah, and when it reveals itself in the Universe, it appears in everything without exception.

4-Human mind can't comprehend this Name

The fourth proof is that most scholars said that the human mind is unable to comprehend the way this Name has been derived nor can it comprehend Allah's Essence. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Reflect upon Allah's Creation; do not reflect upon His Essence, because this will ruin you (your faith, your mind, etc.)"

Hence, this is the Greatest Name of Allah which has the characteristics of the Divine Essence.

5-It is mentioned in the first ayah of the Qur'an

The fifth proof is that according to some scholars the first ayah of the Noble Qur'an which was revealed is:

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful."

According to other scholars it is:

"All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (the Worlds –mankind, jinns and all that exists)."

Thus, this Greatest Name of Allah is mentioned in both ayaat considered to be the first to have been revealed.

6-It is the last Name mentioned in the Qur'an

The sixth proof is that it is both the first Name of Allah mentioned in the Noble Qur'an and the last One. Allah the Almighty says:

"Say: "I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord of mankind, * "The King of mankind, * "The ilah (God) of mankind,"

(An-Nas, 1-3)

Thus, it is the Name of Allah mentioned last in the Noble Qur'an. Allah the Almighty says:

"The ilah (God) of mankind,"

(An-Nas, 3)

7-The inclusiveness of this Name

The seventh proof, according to many scholars, is that this Name is derived from worship as I will explain later. Therefore, this Name should be considered the Greatest One because worship is the absolute humility and submission only to the One Who is full of Absolute Majesty and Greatness. Therefore, some scholars maintain that this Name derives from worship and the One Who deserves to be worshipped and Who deserves absolute submission comprises, beyond all doubt, all Aspects of Perfection. Hence, the Greatest Name of Allah the Almighty

encompasses all the Praiseworthy Attributes and all the Most Beautiful Names and Highest Attributes. The above proves that "Allah" is the Greatest Name of the Almighty.

The station of the one who calls on Allah:

Some scholars said that Allah the Almighty is indivisible and inseparable, so the Greatest Name of Allah indicates His Whole Essence and thus is related to the station of the one who calls on Him. In other words, when you call on Allah by any of His Beautiful Names and deep inside you feel that there is no one else who deserves to be worshipped but Him, then this Name is the Greatest Name of Allah. On the other hand, when man attaches his heart to someone because of this person's wealth, power, or social position, then when he calls on Allah by His Greatest Name and says: O Allah, O most Gracious, O most Merciful I take refuge in Your Favors, etc., he has not really called Allah by His Greatest Name. So, no one really calls on Allah by His Greatest Name except when the feeling that Allah is Greater than anything and anybody else is indeed heartfelt, and this is the profound meaning of the Greatest Name of Allah. Thus, it is not a matter of words. When someone ascribes a partner to Allah, puts his trust in other than Allah and depends on other than Him, then, as long he does that, he will not be calling on Allah by His Greatest Name. When, by contrast, he devotes his worship entirely to Allah, depends on Him and dedicates himself totally to worshipping Him, then whatever Name he uses to call on Allah will be His Greatest Name because of his innermost feeling that Allah is Greater than anything or anybody else.

No one comprehends Allah's Being except He

This Name is the proper noun for the Divine Essence, yet it is impossible for us to comprehend the Being of Allah. Rather, we get to know Allah's Most Beautiful Names and Highest Attributes through His creation. Actually, the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, ordered us not to reflect upon Allah's Being given the fact that His Essence cannot be comprehended. Allah the Almighty says:

"Allah! La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He), the Ever Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber, nor sleep overtake Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world, and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great."

(Al-Baqarah, 255)

"And they ask you (O Muhammad) concerning the Ruh (the Spirit); Say: "The Ruh (the Spirit): it is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little."

(Al-Isra verse 85)

Consider the following simple example. You throw a very thin sheet of paper into a metal-smelting furnace, and after an hour or more you ask yourself what has happened to it. What a silly question! Naturally, it will have vanished immediately, devoured by the flame. Likewise, reflecting upon Allah's Being will ruin man. Thus, he is forbidden to do so. Rather,

whenever these thoughts come to his mind, he should remember the noble ayaat below:

**"Say (O Muhammad (Peace be upon him)): "He is Allah, (the) One. *
"Allah-us-Samad (The Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures
need, He neither eats nor drinks). * "He begets not, nor was He
begotten; * "And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him."**

(Al-Ikhlās, 1-4)

Reflecting upon Allah's Creation:

There is, however, no limit to the reflection upon Allah's creation. In fact, whenever you meet a sign of Allah's creation, you should reflect upon it and ponder over the accuracy of this creation, over Allah's Wisdom, Omnipotence, Richness, Mercy, and Greatness. A scholar said once: "O Allah! If there were two olive leaves exactly the same, You would not be called the Great, the All-Encompassing." Many are the leaves that fall in a park on an autumn day. Can anyone count how many fell down on a certain day in the past? Or can anyone count how many leaves have fallen from trees all around the world? Allah the Almighty says:

"And with Him are the keys of the Ghaib (all that is hidden), none knows them but He. And He knows whatever there is in (or on) the earth and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record."

(Al-An 'am, 59)

These are the Words of our Lord, Allah the Almighty:

"Not a leaf falls, but he knows it."

(Al-An 'am, 59)

Be on your guard. Occasionally, some thoughts displeasing to Allah the Almighty may come to your mind. If you act upon them, you will suffer punishment from Allah immediately, like when a passer-by gets hit by something falling down on his head. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"There is no misstep, tremble in a vein, or scratch by a thorn but by what your hands have sent forth, and what Allah forgives is much more".

(Agreed upon)

Allah is not limited by time or place:

When you think that Allah the Almighty is always with you (by His Support and Knowledge) and is not with someone else, this is a delusion, because Allah the Almighty is with any human being on earth, no matter where they are. Furthermore, Allah the Almighty does not only know all about human beings but also about animals. No animal is killed against His decree. For example, when a hunter shoots a certain bird, that bird will die because such is its fate according to the Divine decree. The same goes for plants. Also the movements of microorganisms inside soil are according to the Knowledge of Allah and His Decree. Allah the Almighty says:

"Verily! Allah grasps the heavens and the earth lest they move away from their places, and if they were to move away from their places, there is not one that could grasp them after Him. Truly, He is Ever Most Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving."

(Fatir, 41)

Man should contemplate how it is that Allah the Almighty is with each creature (by His Knowledge), listens to them, knows their condition,

watches them; how He is aware of what man conceals inside his heart and knows their secrets and what is even more hidden. Verily, He is Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. Allah the Almighty says:

"And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allah (He is the ruling Judge). (And say O Muhammad PBUH to these polytheists:) Such is Allah, my Lord in Whom I put my trust, and to Him I turn in all of my affairs and in repentance."

(As-Shura, 10)

It is only Allah Most High Who deserves to be worshipped; none other has this right. In other words, there is no one who deserves to be worshipped, who deserves to have one's whole life dedicated to him, and who deserves to spend one's youth in obedience to him –except Allah the Almighty. It is a fact that the one who will regret most (in the Hereafter) will be he who has sold his Hereafter for the worldly life; he will be the real loser.

Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said:

"Allah has ninety nine Names, a hundred minus one; whoever enumerates them will enter Paradise."

(Agreed upon)

Next lesson and in some of the following ones, we will tackle again the subject of the Most Beautiful Names of Allah. Should we only utter them? The real objective is different, of course. The issue of enumerating His Names is more exalted than a simple verbal matter or meaningless remembrance of Allah. Rather, we should aim at comprehending the meanings of these Names. We should know what they denote; what the meaning of Al-Rahman or Ar-Rahim is and the difference between them. The same goes for the meanings of the

Gatherer, the Withholder, the Creator of Harm, the Creator of Good, the One Who Degrades, the One Who Exalts, the Giver of Honor and the Giver of Dishonor. All these are the Most Beautiful Names of Allah, mentioned in five ayaat in the Noble Qur'an. So Allah is the Owner of the Most Beautiful Names and the Most Exalted Attributes.