

Allah's 99 Names, Excerpts from the text: Asma-ul Husna

Al-Mui'izz, Al'Mudhill

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

He is the one who honors and the one who humiliates.

In honor and humiliation there is the implication of raising and lowering. The one who has honor has received a state of pride and dignity ('izzah). But this state of pride and dignity obtained from Allah, the One who Honors, is very different from the pride that human imagines he/she deserves (kibr). The pride and dignity of the one who is honored by Allah is not pride in him/herself, but respect paid to the honor given him/her, and to the One who gives honor.

Indeed, he is still a human being. He needs to eat and drink—and he does that lawfully, and in good measure. For Allah, as part of the honor He has bestowed upon him, has given him the wisdom and joy of obtaining the necessities and enjoyments of this world with His good pleasure.

Such a servant of Allah will not stray from Allah's permission and pleasure even if it means death for him/her, because within the gift of the Honorer to the honored is a safeguard against the disgrace of the divine gift. However, the honor that one attributes to oneself or that is attributed to one by other creatures of Allah is a curse that distorts one's reality, making one imagine that one is in a state other than one's own.

Knowledge of oneself leads one to one's Lord. But imagining oneself to be other than one's real self leads one to the Devil. His feature is arrogance, the cause of his expulsion from Allah's presence. That was the first act of Allah in His manifestation of the Humiliator. Then there are those who have neither the dignity and honor awarded by Allah nor false pride that they make up themselves, but who are undignified, shameless and disgraceful.

Their hearts are on fire with the ambition of the world. No good comes from them to anything or anyone because they are selfish and stingy. There is a limit to the degree to which they will humble themselves to beg for the goods of this world. They are guilty of shirk, attributing equals to Allah, because they take those temporal hands that throw bones to them as their gods.

The one who asks and hopes from Allah alone knows that all honor is His and can come only from Him. Those who think that they are the fashioners of their own destinies and can get what they want by themselves, who seek the praise of creatures and are arrogant—these are the followers of Devil. They will receive the punishment of the Devil, and will be expelled from the presence and the care of Allah.

The ones who lower themselves and worship creatures, hoping to receive good from them, will be further humiliated by Allah, and tyrannized by those creatures whom they take for their temporal gods.

'Abd al-Mu'izz is honored with the friendship of Allah, thus rising to the highest summit of honor and fortune, and appearing so to the whole creation.

'Abl al-Mudhill is he who is made an example of degradation. Often Allah manifests His attribute of abaser in His enemies.

Al-Ghafur

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

He is the most forgiving one. An aspect of forgiveness is to hide our faults and treat them as if they had never existed. There are three meanings to the forgiveness of Allah, three separate divine attributes—al-Ghaffar, al-Ghafir, and al-Ghafur. Al-Ghafir is His quality of hiding His servants' shameful acts in order that they be able to live with each other, have faith in each other, and be able to depend on, love and respect each other.

Otherwise, if Allah al-Ghafir in His mercy did not hide our faults, our adverse opinions, ugly thoughts, and hateful feelings, everyone would run away from everyone else. There could be neither a society nor a single family.

Next Allah al-Ghafur hides our faults in the realms of the spirit and of angels just as He does in this world. The angels see things we cannot see in this world. Allah hides our faults from them so that we will not be ashamed in the Hereafter.

Through this name we may find the same respect and closeness from the spirits and the angels—from whom our sins are hidden by Allah al-Ghafur—that His forgiveness permitted us among humans. Allah's name al-Ghaffar is the most encompassing in forgiveness.

A person whose faults are hidden from others is saved from being ashamed in front of them, but he may

still be ashamed of himself within himself. Everyone has a degree of conscience which suffers from his actions. Allah al-Ghaffar in His mercy hides human's faults from him/herself and makes him/her forget in order to alleviate his suffering.

Remember al-Ghafir, the veiler of our faults from the eyes of other men; al-Ghafur, who keeps the knowledge of our faults even from the angles; and al-Ghaffar, who relieves us from the suffering of continual remembrance of our faults. To such a compassionate one should we not be thankful? Should we not confess our sins, repenting with tears in our eyes, asking His forgiveness?

Abd al-Ghafur is slave of the forgiver of wrongs and the hider of faults.

Al-'Adl

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

His is the absolute justice. Justice is the opposite of tyranny. Tyranny causes pain, destruction, and disturbance. Justice secures peace, balance, order and harmony. Allah the Just is the enemy of tyrants; He hates those who support tyrants and their friends, sympathizers and acquaintances. In Islam, tyranny in any form or shape is unlawful. To be just is an honor and distinction befitting a Muslim.

The opposites justice and tyranny have wide implications more important than their simple moral and social consequences. They are equated with harmony versus disharmony, order versus chaos, right against wrong. If in expression of his generosity someone gave money to the rich, swords to scholars and books to soldiers, he would, at one level, be considered a tyrant—for swords benefit soldiers, books, scholars, and the poor need the money.

Yet if Allah did the same His act would be justice—for He sees all, the before and after, the inner and the outer. He is All-Knowing, the Beneficent, the Merciful, the Absolute Justice. He creates some beautiful and others ugly, some strong and others weak; then He renders the beautiful, ugly and the strong, weak; the rich, poor; the wise, dumb; the healthy, sick. All is just. All is right.

It seems to some unjust that there are those who are lame, blind, deaf, starving, insane, and that the young die.

Allah is the creator of the beautiful and the ugly, the good as well as the bad. In this are mysteries difficult to understand. Yet we understand at least that one often needs to know the opposite of a thing in order to understand it. The one who has not experienced sadness cannot know happiness. If there were no ugliness we would be blind to beauty.

Both good and bad are necessary. Allah shows one with the other, the right against the wrong, and shows us the consequences of each. He shows the rewards versus the punishments; then He leaves us free to use our own judgement. Each according to his/her lot may find salvation in misery and sickness,

or damnation in riches. Allah knows what is best for His creation. Only Allah knows our destinies. The realization of destinies is His justice.

Out of respect for the beautiful name of Allah, al-'Adl, we must learn to exercise shukr, tawakkul, and rida'-thankfulness, trust in God, and acceptance. We must be thankful for the good, and accept, without personal judgement or complaint, whatever falls to our lot that does not seem to be good. In so doing, perhaps the mystery of Allah's justice will be revealed to us, and we will be happy with both the joy and the pain coming from the Beloved.

'Abd al-'Adl is the deputy of Allah in the manifestation of His justice. Divine justice is not equality as human imagines it to be. He gives the rights in right measure to the ones who have the right.

Al-Muntaqim

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Allah is the Great Avenger.

Allah punishes those who persist in revolting, raving in their unconsciousness and egotism, creating disharmony, tyrannizing Allah's servants and His creation—those are the ones who are faithless and attribute partners to Allah. He gives them time and occasions to realize and repent for their wrongdoing. He warns them with repeated warnings.

He accepts their excuses; He delays their punishment. In forgiving them, in delaying their punishment, His revenge becomes more terrible. For the persistent sinner has had further chances to sin, thus making himself deserving of harder punishment. Those who become the servants of their egos instead of becoming Allah's servants risk a terrible fall when they feel they are not punished for what they are doing.

They are spoiled by Allah's mercy, soaring higher and higher in their arrogance. Suddenly, one day, Allah brings them down. The fall becomes greater from such heights. Many tyrants were brought to such heights before they were smashed. Allah makes those upon whom He takes vengeance a lesson those whom He wishes to save. Those who know how to take revenge upon the enemies of Allah, the greatest being their own egos, reflect Allah's attribute al-Muntaqim.

Abd al-Muntaqim is he whose vengeance upon the enemies of Allah is terrible, and who is most vengeful toward his own ego, which is his greatest enemy.

Al-Kabir

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

He is the Greatest, whose greatness stretches from before the beginning until after the end. The greatness of all conceivable greatnesses from the beginning to the end is only His creation and is proof of His greatness.

We use the term "infinite" in relation to the heavens and to time. This attribution of infinity to created things is only because a proper conception of them will not fit into our understanding. If we had a vehicle as fast as our thoughts and our imagination, and if we were carried in it in a straight line, in one direction, into depths of the heavens, across immeasurable distances, passing millions of suns in every second, and if we had a life of billions of centuries, we would travel through only a very little of the created universe and created time.

All this which cannot fit into our comprehension was created with a single word and with His will. If He so wills, He could do it again and again and more and more without losing any of His strength. There is no difference for Him between the creation of an atom and the infinite-seeming universe. This is His grandeur as much as we can understand it. He is greater than that.

The realization of His grandeur should raise in us the fear and love of Him, and the wish to be nothing but His servants. Fear of Him is not the fear of a tyrannical strength that could crush one, whether rightfully, in vengeance, or arbitrarily. He is the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Wise, the Just, the Generous, the Loving.

The fear of Allah is a fear that is an outcome of loving Him-wishing to be loved by Him and fearing to lose His love, to face His disappointment in you. The greatest loss for (human) is to receive Allah's disappointment and anger, and the greatest gain for (human) is to be the beloved of Allah. How much effort do we spend for the approval and love that we hope to receive from those whom we consider great! What a loss of effort to seek the love of the servant instead of the Master!

Allah

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Allah is al-Isim al-A'zam, the Greatest Name, which contains all the divine and beautiful attributes and is the sign of the Essence and the cause of all existence.

Allah, the cause of all existence, does not resemble in any way any of His creation. Allah is Allah's name only. Nothing else can in any way assume this name nor share it. As it is said in the Qur'an, Hal ta'lamu lahu samiyan-

"Do you know anyone who is His namesake?" (19:65)

The name Allah contains five meanings, qualities that indicate the non-resemblance of Allah to anything else. They are:

- Qidam. He is before the before. He did not become. He always was.
- Baqa. He is after the after, Eternal; He always will be.
- Wahdaniyyah. He is unique, without partner, without resemblance, the cause of all. All is in need of Him, all has become by the order "Be!" and has died by His order.
- Mukhalfatunlil--hawadith. He is the Creator, bearing no resemblance to the created.
- Qiyam bi-nafsihi. He is self-existent, without any needs.

Allah is perfection. The extent of this perfection is infinite. The greatest name, Allah, contains eight essentials indicating the perfection of Allah:

- Hayyah Allah is ever-living
- 'Ilam. Allah is all-knowing
- Sam'. Allah is all-hearing
- Basar. Allah is all-seeing
- Iradah. All will is His
- Qudrah. All power is His
- Takwin. All existence and actions depend upon Him
- Kalam. The word, all that is said and taught, is His.

The servant of Allah can relate to the divine name, Allah, which encompasses all names, is devoid of all faulty attributes, and contains all attributes of perfection, by seeking a wish in him/herself to become a perfect human. In this attempt, he/she could try to eliminate what is faulty in her/himself. And try to increase what is good in her/himself.

Al Mu'min

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

He is the Illuminator of the light of faith in hearts. He is the Comforter, the Protector of the ones who take refuge in Him. Faith is the security that protects one from all dangers; therefore it is the greatest gift of Allah. The absence of fear in the heart of the believer is commensurate with the degree of his faith.

Men have enemies who continuously try to harm them, to disturb their peace, to lead them astray. The worst of those enemies are their own egos and the accursed Devil. The tyrants, the maligners, the

enviers, come after them. When one says "I take refuge in Allah," one takes refuge in the attribute of al-Mu'min. He does not refuse anyone who takes refuge in Him. But to have faith in al-Mu'min, one has to have faith first. In Islam there are three degrees of faith.

1. Confirmation of one's faith by one's words so that others hear that you believe in Allah, in His Prophet (PBUH&HF) and in the truth of all that he says and does.
2. Confirmation by one's acts; doing what is lawful, and abstaining from what is unlawful.
3. Confirmation by the heart; the firm belief, without any conditions or doubts, in the truth of the Prophet's (PBUH&HF) traditions.

What is essential is faith in the heart. If that leaves, may Allah protect us, one becomes of the non-believers. The one who confirms his faith with his words while his heart is not with Allah is a liar. The one who goes as far as acting as if he believed is a hypocrite. If he is a believer at heart, and for some reason cannot declare it or cannot act upon his faith, he is still a believer.

Watch your faith and your actions as a believer. This is the reflection of al-Mu'min. Be the dependable one in whom others find security. Be the one who does not deny help to those who take refuge in Him, and you will have a taste of al-Mu'min, the Most Secure.

'Abd al-Mu'min is he who has been given refuge by Allah from all disasters, pain and punishment. The property, honor and life of others is safe with and saved by the servant in whom the name al-Mu'min is manifested.

Al-Muhaymin

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

He is the Protector and the Guardian. He is the one who sees to the evolution and the growth of His creation, leading them where they are destined to go. Nothing escapes His attention for a moment. He is the one who watches the good deeds and rewards them fully. He counts the sins exactly, not adding to their punishment even an amount the size of a mustard seed.

One may find the reflections of al-Muhaymin in oneself through consciousness and awareness—by watching intently one's actions, words, thoughts and feelings, and by trying to control them.

'Abd al-Muhaymin: is he who sees the existence and the rules of Allah in everything. In expression of the name ya Muhaymin he watches over himself and others, guarding against wrong and helping them to secure the things to which they have a right.

Topic Tags:

Asma' ul-Husna [3]

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Category:

God & His Attributes [4]

Person Tags:

Allah [5]

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