

Can names of Allah be used for naming children?

By: Khurshid Imam

A. Introduction

A general understanding of Muslims is that one cannot have names like *Rahman*, *Raheem*, *Khaliq*, *Jabbar*, *Malik* etc as these are names of Allah. If someone decides to name his infant as “*Tawwab*” / “*Rahman*” / “*Kareem*” then people oppose him on the ground that these are names of Allah and it’s incorrect to name someone in the name of Allah.

There are gross misconceptions among Muslims about the subject of ‘99 Names of Allah’. We will not discuss them here. Please read the article [“What is the name of Allah” by Khurshid Imam](#) to understand this issue.

The Quran mentions hundreds of attributes of Almighty God:

Al-Rahman = The Most Merciful. *Al-Rahim* = The Most Compassionate. *Al-Basir* = The Seer, The Insightful. *Al-Khaliq* = The creator. *Al-Raziq* = The sustainer. So on..

B. How do we understand an attribute of Allah?

We say that Almighty God is merciful, compassionate, creator, sustainer. However, at the same time we see that human beings too possess these qualities.

*Allah is MERCIFUL. A human being is merciful towards fellow human being, towards animals, towards other creatures. But there is absolutely no comparison between the degree of mercy of Allah and the degree of mercy of a human being.

Allah is AL-RAHMAN = Most Merciful.

Human being is RAHMAN = Merciful

The quality of “RAHMAN” i.e. MERCY in its highest sense refers to God alone.

Allah showers His mercy on His creatures spread throughout the universe, His mercy is evident in numerous forms, He showers his mercy even on those who disbelieve in Him, and His mercy in absolute sense is beyond our perception.

*Allah is CREATOR. A human being is also the creator of houses, machines, bridges and millions of other things. But there is absolutely no comparison between the degree of creativity of Allah and the degree of creativity of a human being.

Allah is AL-KHALIQ = THE CREATOR.
Human being is KHALIQ = CREATOR

The quality of 'CREATIVITY' in its highest form refers to God alone.

Allah created heavens and the earth and all that is between them, His creativity in absolute sense is beyond our perception.

Please note: In Arabic language when "Al" is added with a common noun then it becomes Proper Noun (One particular entity). So Khaliq refers to anyone who can create but Al-Khaliq refers to a particular Khaliq, i.e Allah.

Similarly we add "Al" with Raziq and it becomes Al-Raziq referring to Allah only.

* Allah sees, hears, and knows. Human beings also see, hear and know but these qualities cannot be compared with seeing, listening and knowing of Allah. The quality of seeing, hearing and knowing in highest form refers to Allah only. Allah sees, hears and knows everything that exists no matter how small or how big. Human beings do not possess this level of seeing, hearing and knowing.

* Allah is Al-Raziq. He provides sustenance to all those who need sustenance. Human beings also provide sustenance so human beings can also be called RAZIQ. Human beings provide sustenance to some of fellow human beings. But Allah is AL-RAZIQ – one whose sustenance providing quality cannot be compared with anyone. Allah has made arrangement of sustenance for animals, plants, insects, fishes, microscopic life and so on.

So, there is nothing wrong in naming someone as *Khaliq, Raziq, Malik, Kareem* etc. It becomes shirk only when someone compares a quality of Allah and says that this **quality in SAME degree** is applicable for anyone other than Allah.

C. Allah himself addresses human being with same name as His name.

فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ So blessed is **Allah, the best of creators**. Quran 23:14

وَتَذَرُونَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ Do you call upon Ba'l and leave **the best of creators**. Quran 37:125

Quran is telling that among many KHALIQ [note the plural word KHALEQEEN] – Allah is the best *Khaliq*.

The word(s) '*raziqeen*' [many RAZIQ] appears 6 time(s) in 6 Ayah(s) in Quran

وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ Jesus said "...". You are the **best of providers**". Quran 5:114

Quran is telling that among many RAZIQ [note the plural word RAZIQEEN] – Allah is the best Raziq.

وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَنْ لَسْتُمْ لَهُ بِرَازِقِينَ And We have made for you therein means of living and [for] those for whom you are not providers. Quran 15:20

In other words, Ayah is saying that Allah provides sustenance to even those for which human beings are not RAZEQEEN.

الرَّازِقِينَ وَاللَّهُ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ And indeed, it is **Allah who is the best of providers**. Quran 22:58

الرَّازِقِينَ وَاللَّهُ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ and **He is the best of providers [RAZIOEEN]**. Quran 23:72, 34:39

الرَّازِقِينَ وَاللَّهُ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ and **Allah is the best of providers [RAZIOEEN]**. Quran 62:11

There are many RAZIQ, among them Allah is the best RAZIQ.

There are many who do MAKAR, but Allah is the best of MAKEREEN. Quran 3:54; 8:30

Wamakaroo wamakara Allahu waAllahu khayru almakireena

Note: In order to have better understanding of this ayah please refer to the article: "[Does Allah deceive? makar-Allahu](#)"

الْحَاكِمِينَ فَاصْبِرُوا حَتَّىٰ يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ

.. be patient until Allah judges between us. And **He is the best of judges [Hakemeen]**. Quran 7:87

الْحَاكِمِينَ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْحَاكِمِينَ And He **is the best of judges [Hakemeen]**. Quran 10:109, 12:80

There are many judges but Allah is the best Judge. So, a human being can be named as HAKIM.

الْفَاصِلِينَ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ He is the **best of deciders**. Quran 6:57

النَّاصِرِينَ بَلِ اللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَطِئ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ But Allah is your protector, and **He is the best of helpers**. Quran 3:150

Note: I could not find NASIR as one of the attributes in popular '99 names of Allah'. But Quran has given this attribute to Allah.

الْفَاتِحِينَ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ Our Lord.. You are the **best of those who give decision [MANY FATIH or FATIHEEN]**. Quran 7:89

A man can be FATIH. Allah is Al-Fatih.

الْغَافِرِينَ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْغَافِرِينَ Moses said - ... and You are the **best of forgivers**. Quran 7:155

Human beings forgive, Allah also forgives, but Allah forgives in the highest degree, Allah is AL GHAFIR.

الْوَارِثِينَ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ And [mention] Zechariah, when he called to his Lord, "My Lord, do not leave me alone [with no heir], while **you are the best of inheritors**." Quran 21:89

There can be many WARIS, but Allah is the best WARIS. So, one can have WARIS as name.

الْمُنْزِلِينَ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِينَ and **You (Allah) are the best to accommodate [us]**.' " Quran 23:29

وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ and You are the best of the merciful.' Quran 23:109

Human beings as well as Allah are RAHMAN – they both are merciful, but there is no comparison in the degree of mercy. Mercy in its highest form refers to Allah alone.

وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

And, [O Muhammad], say, "My Lord, forgive and have mercy, and You are the best of the merciful." Quran 23:118

D. Allah has used his attributive name for Prophet:

No wonder Allah has referred Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as RAUF and RAHEEM in Quran.

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

"There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind [RAUF] and merciful [RAHEEM]." Quran 9:128

Important: Human being should not be assigned names that are specific only for Almighty God.

Many people say that one should be named as *AbdulRahman* instead of *rahman*, *abdulKareem* instead of *Kareem*, *AbdulJabbar* instead of *jabbar* because *Rahman*, *Kareem*, *Jabbar* etc are names of Allah. It's good to have these names but it is NOT mandatory.

AbdulRahman = Abd + Al + Rahman = Slave of Al-Rahman

AbdulKareem = Abd + Al + Kareem = Slave of Al-Kareem

AbdulJabbar = Abd + Al + Jabbar = Slave of Al-Jabbar.

In fact above said name are same as having name without "AL".

You can name someone as AbdulRahman OR Rahman but certainly not Al-Rahman.

You can name someone as AbdulKareem OR Kareem but certainly not Al-kareem.

You can name someone as AbdulJabbar OR Jabbar but certainly not Al-Jabbar.

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