

What is the name of Allah?

By: Khurshid Imam

A. Introduction

It is said - "There are 99 attributive names of Allah and Allah is the personal name of God".

Questions are raised:

- Can God have personal name?
- All attributive names are in Arabic only?
- What about names for God in other languages?
- Is Allah the "Arabic" God?

B. Has Allah only 99 names?

Narrated Abu Huraira: Allah has ninety-nine Names, i.e., one hundred minus one, and whoever believes in their meanings and acts accordingly, will enter Paradise; and Allah is Witr (one) and loves 'the Witr' (i.e., odd numbers). Sahih Bukhari, Book #75, Hadith #419

Scholars like Imam Nawawi, Ibn Taimiyah, Ibnul Qayyim etc hold the position that names of Allah are NOT limited to 99.

There is another Hadees which proves existence of numerous names of Allah.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي عَبْدُكَ ابْنُ عَبْدِكَ ابْنُ أَمَتِكَ
 نَاصِيَتِي بِيَدِكَ ، مَاضٍ فِيَّ حُكْمُكَ ،
 عَدْلٌ فِيَّ قَضَائِكَ أَسْأَلُكَ بِكُلِّ اسْمٍ
 هُوَ لَكَ سَمَّيْتَ بِهِ نَفْسَكَ أَوْ أَنْزَلْتَهُ
 فِي كِتَابِكَ ، أَوْ عَلَّمْتَهُ أَحَدًا مِنْ
 خَلْقِكَ أَوْ اسْتَأْثَرْتَ بِهِ فِي عِلْمِ
 الْغَيْبِ عِنْدَكَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ الْقُرْآنَ رَبِيعَ
 قَلْبِي ، وَنُورَ صَدْرِي وَجَلَاءَ حُزْنِي
 وَذَهَابَ هَمِّي.

O Allaah, I am Your slave, son of Your slave, son of Your female slave, my forelock is in Your hand, your command over me is forever executed and Your decree over me is just. I ask You by every Name belonging to You Which You named Yourself with, or revealed in Your Book, or You taught to any of Your creation, or You have preserved in the knowledge of the unseen with You, that You make the Qur'aan the life of my heart and the light of my breast, and a departure for my sorrow and a release for my anxiety– but Allaah will take away his sorrow and grief, and give him in their stead joy.

Source: Musnad Ahmad 1/391 and Al-Albaanee declared it sahih.

C. List of 99 names of Allah: reality or fabrication?

There is a Hadees in Trimdhi that speaks about certain 99 names of Allah. This Hadees has been judged weak by many hadith scholars such as al-Tirmidhi himself, al-Nawawi, ibn Hajar, ibn Taymiyyah, ibn al-Qayyim, ibn Kathir, al-San'ani and others. The list of 99 names was inserted by the narrator Al Walid Ibn Muslim and was not told by the Prophet.

D. Names of God are not confined to numbers or languages.

*"Say: "Call **Allah** or call **Al Rahmaan** (Most Gracious), by whatever name you invoke Him (it is the same), for **to Him belong the most beautiful Names** (Asma ul husna)"- Quran, Surah Isra 17:110*

1. The Ayah says that whether you call Allah or Al-Rahman; you can call him by any name; all beautiful names belong to him.
2. There is no limitation on number of names or attributes of Allah.
3. There is no personal name of almighty God. All names of God are attributive names.

It is also fact that even before the revelation of Quran, Arabs used to refer 'Allah' for Almighty God. It's a misconception that Quran brought or renewed the name 'Allah' for Almighty God.

In simple words – 'Allah' refers to *Al+Ilah* = one who is worthy to be worshipped. The root of word '**Allah**' is '*ilah*' which has close resemblance with the Hebrew word '*iloh*' ['*Elohim*' in Hebrew refers to God].

Note: I am aware of some people's opinion that Allah is not made up of Al+ilah rather its one personal name of God. I respect their view but find it wrong because it is based on the wrong assumption that Almighty God has personal name Allah.

E. More than 99 names found in Quran

- There are various names mentioned in the Quran as well as in the hadith that are not amongst the 99 Names as mentioned in the Sunan Trimdhi Hadees [discussed earlier].
- **Rabb** which is clearly one of the Names of Allah - is not mentioned in the 99 names list.
- The same goes with Al Jamil, At Tayyib, Al Witr, Al Mannan, As Subbuh, Asy Shafi, Al Musta'an, Al Kafeel, Al Waafi, Al Waaqi, Al Munsyi' and many more which have not been mentioned amongst the 99 Names.
- Researchers have found far hundreds of attributes of Allah from Quran.

F. How do you know Allah / God?

How do we know about Islam or Almighty God? Answer is: through Quran i.e. God's word. What is Quran? Quran is the message of God for the mankind.

The word of God is available to us in "**language**" we understand. Language is evolved by human beings. Human beings brought into existence to Aramaic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and the **revelations of God were in these languages**. Ponder over the chronological order:

- In the beginning only God existed. There was no Arabic, no Sanskrit, no Hebrew.
- Then creation took place. Human being started living on the earth.
- As a result of the intellectual evolution, human being started languages. Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic, English came into existence gradually.

- God revealed his scripture in these languages and **detailed about himself using human-languages.**

The last point has the crux of the article. God describes about himself using the language that was developed by human beings. It's not the case that God reveals his message in a language that is not understandable for human beings.

So, when Almighty God mentions in the Quran '*Allah*', '*Khaliq*', '*Raziq*' etc for himself the he is using words that are understandable for human being. Allah is not mentioning words that human being cannot understand. In the revelation sent before Quran, in non-Arabic language – Allah would have used terms for himself that people of that language would have understood. Revelation of God in Sanskrit would have referred God in Sanskrit language, revelation of God in Persian language would have referred God in Persian language.

Read [this](#) for better understanding on attributes of Allah.

G. Conclusion

1. It is a misconception that the almighty GOD has a **personal name**.
2. All names of Allah are attributive name including the name Allah.
3. God can be referred in any language. There is no restriction of language. God is beyond the boundaries of language.
4. It is wrong to say that God has only 99 names. In fact, there is no limit to names of God.
5. To God belongs most beautiful names.

***** Feedback: serviceforhumanity@gmail.com *****