

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

KEYS TO THE DIVINE NAMES

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Introduction



All praise is for Allah, Lord of all the worlds. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah - the First, the Last and the Everlasting; and I bear witness that Muḥammad ﷺ is His Noble Messenger and the Seal of the Prophets. May Allah's peace, blessings and mercy be upon him, his family, his companions and all who follow them in righteousness.

As Muslims, our hearts yearn to return to our first home – Paradise - and the ultimate meeting with our Creator ﷻ. Allah ﷻ revealed to His Prophet ﷺ the path to that eternal good-fortune, and part of that journey is to know Him through His Divine Names. The Prophet ﷺ said in an authentic hadith:

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا، مِائَةً إِلَّا وَاحِدًا، مَنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ.

‘Allah has ninety-nine Names – one short of a hundred, whoever does *iḥṣā*’ of them will enter Paradise.’ (Bukhārī)

The term *iḥṣā*’ does not merely mean to memorise or know the Names; Scholars explain it involves: memorising the Names and their number; understanding their obvious meanings as well as their more subtle ones; and utilising them in sincere worship and supplication.

The Names of Allah ﷻ are like radiant gems, layered with deep, intricate meanings. To treat them superficially is to miss their profound beauty. Many scholars have written on this subject, seeking to peel back the subtle layers of meaning behind each of the Divine Names.

Importantly, readers will notice there are more than ninety-nine Names of Allah ﷻ found in primary sources, but scholars explain that

this hadith does not restrict the number to ninety-nine. Rather, it highlights a special set of Names that are most known and clearer in meaning. Hence, this is not a comprehensive study of all of the Divine Names. This is why we have opted to not include the number 99 in the title of this book. Also, there are names of Allah ﷻ that are gifted to the most loyal of His lovers, and even some kept within the secret confines of Divine Knowledge.

It is out of Allah's immense mercy that He has revealed some of His Beautiful Names through the verses of the Holy Qur'an and the words of His beloved Prophet ﷺ. This collection of the Divine Names will help us achieve three things:

1. to know Allah ﷻ
2. to strengthen our worship of Allah ﷻ, specifically through supplication
3. to ignite a deep love for Allah ﷻ in our hearts

Knowing Allah ﷻ

True knowledge must be rooted in a reliable source. And what source is more reliable than the Holy Qur'an itself? Allah's Names are scattered throughout the pages of the Qur'an, illustrating His attributes for those who reflect. These Names help us to know Allah ﷻ and connect with Him on a deeper level.

To begin our journey, each Name of Allah ﷻ in this collection has been introduced with a verse of the Qur'an – Allah's own words explaining Himself. Through these verses, we hope to draw closer to our Creator ﷻ.

Yet, it must be understood that, despite the numerous books written on the subject, none can truly encompass all knowledge about Allah ﷻ and His Names, and trying to arrive at a conclusion of this knowledge is a futile endeavour. The full knowledge of His reality and all His Names is known only to Him, the All Knowing, the All Wise. The Prophet ﷺ once said,

تَفَكَّرُوا فِي آلَاءِ اللَّهِ، وَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي اللَّهِ.

‘Ponder over Allah’s blessings, not Allah Himself.’ (Ṭabarānī, *Awsaṭ*)

Worship and Supplication

Allah ﷻ never instructs us to do something without providing the method to fulfil it. The greatest purpose, as instructed by Allah ﷻ, is to worship Him. Hence, He ﷻ filled the Qur’an with ways to know Him and achieve closeness to Him through worship. One powerful way to achieve this is through His Divine Names.

﴿وَلِلّٰهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا﴾

*To Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names, so call upon
Him by them. (7:180)*

The Divine Names hold a special place in *du‘ā*. The Qur’an and the Sunnah are filled with countless examples of *du‘ā*s that specifically mention His Divine Names and qualities, and some *du‘ā*s refer to His Names without explicitly mentioning them. One such example is: ‘I ask You by every Name of Yours; which You have named Yourself, or revealed in Your Book, or taught any one of Your creation or have kept exclusively to Yourself in the knowledge of the Unseen...’ (Aḥmad)

In honour of this special connection, each Name of Allah ﷻ in this collection is accompanied by a heartfelt *du‘ā* - either from the Qur’an, the Prophet ﷺ or righteous Muslims – to help us act upon our knowledge and call upon Allah ﷻ sincerely.

Love of Allah ﷻ

Islamic literature is brimming with books on the topic of Allah’s beautiful Names, with scholars such as Imam al-Ghazālī (505AH) and Ibn al-Qayyim (751AH) exploring the subject in great depth. Especially within the tradition of Taṣawwuf, scholars focused on the Divine Names to attain true cognition (*ma‘rifah*) of al-Wadūd (the All-Loving) ﷻ. Scholars say that the topic of the Names of Allah ﷻ is the greatest knowledge due to its subject matter; since the subject matter is Allah ﷻ - the Greatest - therefore knowledge of that subject

Keys to the Divine Names



بِمَوْقِفِ دُلِّي دُونَ عِزَّتِكَ الْعَظْمَى بِمَخْفِي سِرِّي لَا أُحِيطُ بِهِ عِلْمَا
 بِإِطْرَاقِ رَأْسِي بِاعْتِرَافِي بِذِلَّتِي بِمَدِّ يَدِي أَسْتَمِطِرُ الْجُودَ وَالرَّحْمَى
 بِأَسْمَائِكَ الْحُسْنَى الَّتِي بَعْضُ وَصْفِهَا لِعِزَّتِهَا يَسْتَعْرِقُ النَّثْرُ وَالنَّظْمَا
 بِعَهْدِ قَدِيمٍ مِنَ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ بِمَنْ كَانَ مَكْنُونًا فَعَرِفَ بِالْأَسْمَا
 أَذُقْنَا شَرَابَ الْأَنْبَسِ يَا مَنْ إِذَا سَقَى مُحِبًّا شَرَابًا لَا يُضَامُ وَلَا يَنْظَمَا

By my meek stance before Your Strength Divine,
 by mysteries too subtle for my mind,

By my admitted lowness and bowed head, by
 hands – that wish for mercy, gifts – outspread,

By Your Most Beauteous Names, that when
 described in part, exhaust the prose and
 verse of scribes.

By the Old Vow of: ‘Am I not Your Lord?’ by Him
 Concealed Who’s by His Names adored,

Grant us a draught of closeness, for those nursed
 by Your love’s drink will know no harm, nor thirst.

Imam Shāfi‘ī



الله

Allah

He is Allah, other than Whom there is no god¹

Qur'an

﴿ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لِدُنْيِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ ﴾

So, be assured that there is no god but Allah, and seek forgiveness for your fault, and for (the faults of) the believing men and believing women. And Allah knows your moving from place to place and your permanent abode. (47:19)

Supplication

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَتَعَالَى

1 The Name Allah represents the true existence, the One Who unites all divine attributes and is the subject of lordship. Everything exists through Him, as nothing can exist independently. It is the greatest of the ninety-nine Names because it encompasses all divine attributes, while the others refer to specific attributes. It is unique and specific, as it is exclusively used for Allah ﷻ, unlike other names, such as 'the Powerful,' that can be attributed to others. Ghazālī, *the Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, p.51.

جَدُّكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ.

*Subḥānaka 'llāhumma wa bi-ḥamdik, wa tabāraka
'smuk, wa ta'ālā jadduk, wa lā ilāha ghayruk.*

Glory is to You, O Allah, and praise; blessed is Your Name, exalted is Your Majesty, and there is no deity besides You. Tirmidhī (242)

Poetry

My Beloved revealed Himself in the reflections
of His beauty, in every glimpse, I saw flashes of
the Beloved,

Adorned with the loftiest of Names, each flash, a
momentary encounter with His radiance.

You appeared within all that You created, the
soul's vision, unravelling, piece by piece, yet never
severed, never apart from You.

And the truth stood bare in every form, each thing
a subtle expression of the One who brought it
into being. Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī.

الرَّحْمَنُ

The Beneficent (*ar-Raḥmān*)

Qur'an

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ ۝ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ۝ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ۝
عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۝﴾

*The Beneficent taught the Qur'an. He created man.
He taught him (how) to express himself. (55:1-4)*

Supplication¹

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُهُ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ، اللَّهُمَّ أَذْهَبْ
عَنِّي الْهَمَّ وَالْحَزْنَ.

*Bismi 'llāhi 'lladhī lā ilāha ghayrūhu ar-Raḥmāni
'r-Raḥīm. Allāhumma adh-hib 'annī 'l-hamma
wa'l-ḥazana.*

In the Name of Allah, the One other than Whom
there is no god, the Beneficent, the Merciful. O

1 The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, 'The merciful will be shown mercy by ar-Raḥmān. Be merciful to those on the earth, and the One in the heavens will have mercy upon you.' Tirmidhī (1924)

Allah, remove all sorrow and anxieties from me.
Ṭabarānī, *Du‘ā’* (658)

Poetry

Gaze upon creation with tender grace, show mercy
to the young, respect the old.

With kindness tend to all in every place,
their rights uphold with gentle hands enfold.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Ajibah