

Expansions

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The 99 Names of Allah

Fode Drame

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The 99 Names of Allah

EXPANSIONS - VOLUME 5

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

UNDERSTANDING THE VITAL ESSENCE

As the word vital indicates, the vital essence is the life force that animates and mobilizes our entire being. It is introduced into the human body along with the spirit if we consider the spirit as the breath of The Divine. The two enter into our bodies together and leave our bodies together as well.

The vital essence looks and acts like mercury. As the movement of mercury in a thermometer changes by the level of heat in the environment, similarly, our vital essence rises when exposed to a higher temperature and drops as the temperature lowers. The greatest source of heat and energy in our system being is symbolized by the sun.

The people who are prescribed for enlightenment are first exposed to the light of the stars, which are extremely cold in nature. This exposure causes their vital essence to drop down to a freezing point, similar to that which happened to the Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim) when he saw the stars, he felt cold and sickly.

Then he took a look into the stars. So he said, 'I indeed am sick.' (The Quran, chapter *Those Ranged in Ranks*, 37:88-89)

In the second phase, the individual is exposed to the full radiance of sunlight, which raises the vital essence the way that heat raises mercury in a thermometer. But it only raises the vital essence to bring it to a cool and peaceful temperature. Again, we find the example of the of Abraham:

They said, 'Burn him and give victory to your gods if you are going to do something.' We said, 'O fire, be cool and peaceful upon Abraham.' (The Quran, chapter *The Prophets*, 21: 68-69)

Other examples of this are found in the story of the youth

of the cave as well as the story of Dhul Qarnain in chapter *The Cave*. From the point of exposure to heat or the sun, a cycle of creation is established whereby the stars lower causing the vital essence to drop. Then the sun lowers, and the vital essence rises and comes to the just middle. Eventually, the good action that evolves out of the process is raised up to God and accepted.

Have you not seen your Lord how He causes the shadow to extend. Had He so wished, He would have caused it to be still then We cause the sun to lower on it. Then We will raise it up unto Us a gentle raising. (The Quran, chapter *The Criterion*, 25:45-46)

Blessed is He who if He so willed would have made for you better than the gardens under which rivers flow and would have made for you palaces. (The Quran, chapter *Originator of Creation*, 35:10)

THE CLASSIFICATION OF GOD'S NAMES

Allah, The All Encompassing Merciful, The All Merciful

This trio forms the models according to which God's names are classified into three categories: (1) God's Personal Name (Allah), (2) God's names of quality, (3) God's names of action.

The Prototype of Names of Quality

The name *Al-Rahmān* represents the second category of God's names: the names of quality. This means that all of God's attributes are one. There is no differentiation between them. They are absolute within themselves since they do not relate to anything else. His Mercy encompasses everything because He is the Lord (*rabb*) of everything.

The concept of faith always goes back to these two attributes (*Al-Rahmān, rabb*) because faith means to believe in the essential unity of God's attributes. Furthermore, the names of quality represented by the name *Al-Rahmān* contrast sharply with the next category, known as the names of action. The names of quality present static and perennial aspects of God's attributes that do not allow for change in any shape or form. On the contrary, the names of action, which usually derive from the names of quality, mark the transition from absolute to particular and from unity to differentiation.

The Prototype of Names of Action

Al-Rahīm represents the third category of God's names called the names of action. These names indicate that not only Allah has these qualities, but that He is capable of transmitting them unto whomever He pleases. He has the qualities of mightiness, richness, life, exaltedness on the one hand He is also capable of making anyone He likes rich or mighty, living or exalted. Thus, He has the power *and* the power to empower. As possessor of dominion, He has the abso-

lute right to give unto whom He pleases and to withhold from whom He pleases.

Say, 'O Lord, possessor of dominion You bestow dominion on whom you please and You withhold dominion from whom You please, You bestow might to whom You please and you humble whom You please. All good lies in your Hand for You have power over everything. You cause the night to enter the day and cause the day to enter the night, and you bring forth the living from the dead and You bring forth the dead from the living and You provide for whom You please without reckoning.' (The Quran, chapter *The Family of Imran*, 3:26-27)

These two verses contain eight names of action, by derivation, four pairs. The first pair is (1) *Al-Rāfi'*, The Raiser who raises someone by giving him dominion and (2) *Al-Khāfiḍ*, The Lowerer, who lowers someone by withholding dominion from him. The second pair is (3) *Al-Mu'izz*, The Bestower of Might, who gives might and (4) *Al-Mudhill*, The Humbler, who withholds honor from someone. The third pair is (5) *Al-Bāsiṭ*, The Spreader who causes the daylight to spread out and (6) *Al-Qābiḍ*, The Constrainer who rolls up the night. The fourth pair is (7) *Al Muḥyi*, The Bestower of Life who brings the dead to life and (8) *Al-Mumit*, The Decreeer of death who cause death.

In the end, God summarized all of these names in two phrases: (1) "You have power over everything" and (2) "You provide for whom You please without reckoning." In other words, since He has claim over everything, He can give whatever He pleases to whomsoever He pleases without reckoning.

INTRODUCTION

The significance of this commentary on the names of Allah lies in the fact that understanding the meaning of these names is essential to understanding the Quran itself as a whole. Imam Al Shafi'i, one of the founders of the four schools of Islamic Jurisprudence, is quoted as saying, "Whatever the *umma* (the nation) says is merely a commentary on the tradition of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and whatever the traditions of the Prophet say is merely a commentary on the Quran, and whatever the Quran says, it is a mere commentary on the excellent names of Allah." The implication of this statement is that the Quran itself is an exegesis of the names of Allah. Any casual glance of the Quran confirms this view, for every page of it contains a number of God's names.

Another point that corroborates with this view is the story of Adam and the instruction he received from God. This instruction centered on the names of God and the names of things, which derive their names from the name of God.

And when your Lord said to the angels, 'Verily I am going to appoint a vicegerent in the earth.' They said, 'Are you going to appoint therein one that will spread corruption therein and will spill the blood while we are glorifying Your praises and sanctifying [your names] for You.' He said, 'Verily I know that which you do not know.' So He taught Adam all the names, then He presented them to the angels and He said, 'Inform me about the names of these if indeed you are truthful.' They said, 'Glory be unto You. There is no knowledge for us except that which You have taught us. Verily You are The All-knowing The All-wise.' He said, 'O Adam! Inform them about their names.' So when he informed them about their names, He

said, 'Did I not say unto you that I indeed know the secrets of the heavens and of the earth and I know all that you show and indeed all that you hide.' (The Quran, Chapter *The Cow*, 2:30-33)

In view of the pre-emanent place that the names of God occupy in the study of the Quran, many scholars, both in the past and the present, have written on the subject. Among the eminent scholars who have tried their hands on the subject are: Al Qashiri, Al Ghazali, Al Qurtubi, Az-Zarruq, and Ibn Al-Qayyim, to name a few. This present work is a summary of all of them, adding some insight while omitting some details that may not be relevant to the modern reader. This work is intended to become a tool for a profound study of the Quran. In that capacity it is an invaluable guidebook, if not to say indispensable for anyone who is seriously considering an in depth study of the sacred text.

Thus the following discussion and explanation on the names of God are rooted in the Quranic text. Each chapter explains one name of God, and the relevant verses are provided after the discussion. The reader is free to investigate these verses further to gain a better understanding of the name discussed. In some instances, a chapter also contains one or more sub-discussions, elaborating on the finer points of the name or its connection to other aspects of Islamic spirituality and cosmology. Each chapter is independent, and therefore this book does not have to be read linearly beginning with the first chapter.

Imam Fode Drame
Vancouver, BC CANADA
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PART 1

The 99 Names of Allah

CHAPTER 1



Allāh

The Personal Name of God

Allāh is the personal name of God, which is derived from the word *il-lāh* (deity). In the word *il-lāh*, the second *l* (Arabic letter *lām*) is an abbreviation for *il* which is a definite article, thus the word *Allāh* comes to mean “The” (*il*) “Deity” (*lāh*). Also analyzing the name *Allāh* from the point of view of the science of letters (*‘ilm al ḥurūf*) the name is composed of two parts: (1) *ill* which means “to make,” “to do,” “to create,” or “to cause,” and (2) *hu* which means “things.” *Allāh* therefore means the creator of everything, the One who causes everything to be.

Say, ‘Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.’ Say, ‘It is Allah.’ Say, ‘Have you then taken others as allies besides Him who do not possess any power to benefit or harm themselves.’ Say, ‘Is the blind equal to the seeing or is the darkness equal to the light or have they ascribed partners to Allah who have created the likeness of His creation so that they are confused in the matter of creation.’ Say, ‘Allah is Creator of all things. It is He who is the One, the Overpowering.’ (The Quran, chapter *The Thunder*, 13:16)

The syllable *il* is also used in old Arabic, Aramaic and Hebrew as a noun for God. It occurred twice in the Quran:

How then if they were to gain the upper hand on you, they will not consider regarding you, neither God [*ill-an*] nor trea-

ty. They please you with their mouths but their hearts refuse you and most of them are renegades. (The Quran, chapter The Repentance, 9:8)

They will not take God [*ill-an*] nor any treaty in the consideration with regards to any believer and those are the ones who are the transgressors. (The Quran, chapter The Repentance, 9:10)

Thus the name *Allāh* represents God as The Supreme Creator who originated everything. His two most fundamental attributes are knowledge and creation. For only one who knows can create, whereas the purpose of knowing is to create. Hence, these two attributes, knower and creator, are juxtaposed.

Verily your Lord is The All Creator, The All Knower. (The Quran, chapter *The Rocky Mountain*, 15:86)

Say, He will bring it to life the one who created it the first time and it is He who is All Knowing about each creation. (The Quran, chapter *Yā-Sīn*, 36:79)

Does He not know, He who has created, while He it is The All Subtle, The All Acquainted? (The Quran, chapter *The Dominion*, 67:14)

Is not the one who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them. Nay! He is The All Creator, The All Knowing. (The Quran, chapter *Yā-Sīn*, 36:81)

Thus God is the One who knows, commands and creates.

Your Lord indeed is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, then He established His presence over the throne. He causes the night to cover the day following it in swift pursuit and He created the sun and the moon, and the stars subservient through His commandment. Lo! For Him is

1. *Allāh*

the creation and the commandment. Blessed is Allah Lord of the worlds. (The Quran, chapter The Heights, 7:54)

CHAPTER 2

الرحمن

Al-Raḥmān

The All Encompassing Merciful

Name of Quality

The name *Al-Raḥmān* refers to the One who's mercy encompasses everything without discrimination.

My Mercy encompasses everything. (The Quran, chapter *The Heights*, 7:156)

O our Lord you encompass everything in mercy and knowledge. (The Quran, chapter *The Forgiver*, 40:7)

Say, call Allah or call *Al-Raḥmān* by whichever name you call Him all the excellent names are His. And do not read your prayer aloud nor make it silent and find a way between them [neither loud nor silent]. (The Quran, chapter *The Night Journey*, 17:110)

The name *Al-Raḥmān* allows for the existence of opposites like joy and sorrow; fear and hope, anger and pleasure, and so on. Because of this, the mercy of this name is not pure; it is mixed with a measure of justice. This world is under the sway of the name *Al-Raḥmān*, hence everything in this world is mixed to some degree. In the next life, the pure mercy within *Al-Raḥmān* will be extracted, leaving behind justice and retribution. Thus the means that the mercy in the hereafter will be completely free from any measure of

2. *Al-Raḥmān*

retribution. Conversely, retribution will be free from any measure of mercy.

Say, 'Who has forbidden the adornments of Allah that He has produced for His slaves and [forbidden] the things from the sustenance?' Say, 'It is for those who believe in the life of this world and it is purely for them on the day of resurrection.' Thus We do detail the signs for a people who know. (The Quran, chapter *The Heights*, 7:32)

The Prototype of a Name of Quality

The name *Al-Raḥmān* represents the second category of God's names: the names of quality. This means that all of God's attributes are one. There is no differentiation between them. They are absolute within themselves since they do not relate to anything else. His Mercy encompasses everything because He is the Lord (*rabb*) of everything.

The concept of faith always goes back to these two attributes (*Al-Raḥmān*, *rabb*) because faith means to believe in the essential unity of God's attributes. Furthermore, the names of quality represented by the name *Al-Raḥmān* contrast sharply with the names of action. The names of quality present static and perennial aspects of God that do not allow for change in any shape or form. On the contrary, the names of action, which usually derive from the names of quality, mark the transition from absolute to particular and from unity to differentiation.

CHAPTER 3

الرحيم

Al-Raḥīm

The All Merciful

Name of Action

The name *Al-Raḥīm* refers to the specific mercy of God reserved for those who believe. The general mercy is valid as long as we live in this world, but the special mercy is specific to the individual believer and extends beyond this world.

He is All Merciful (*Al-Raḥīm*) to true believers. (The Quran, chapter *The Confederates*, 33:43)

He admits into His mercy whomsoever He pleases. (The Quran, chapter *The Consultation*, 42:8)

Thus the name *Al-Raḥīm* represents this pure mercy that is extracted from *Al-Raḥmān*. It is a mercy that has no measure of justice or retribution and is given to those with pure, unmixed faith in God.

The Prototype of Names of Action

Al-Raḥīm represents the third category of God's names called the names of action. These names indicate that not only Allah has these qualities, but that He is capable of transmitting them unto whomever he pleases. Although he has the qualities of mightiness, richness, life, exaltedness, He is also capable of making anyone He likes rich or mighty, living or exalted. Thus, He has the power and the

3. *Al-Raḥīm*

power to empower. As Possessor of dominion, He has the absolute right to give unto whom He pleases and to withhold from whom He pleases.

Say, 'O Lord, possessor of dominion You bestow dominion on whom you please and You withhold dominion from whom You please, You bestow might to whom You please and you humble whom You please. All good lie in your Hand for You have power over everything. You cause the night to enter the day and cause the day to enter the night, and you bring forth the living from the death and You bring forth the dead from the living and You provide for whom You please without reckoning.' (The Quran, chapter *The Family of Imran*, 3:26-27)

These two verses contain eight names of action, by derivation, four pairs. The first pair is (1) *Al-Rāfi'*, The Raiser who raises someone by giving him dominion and (2) *Al-Khāfiḍ*, The Lowerer, who lowers someone by withholding dominion from him. The second pair is (3) *Al-Mu'izz*, The Bestower of Might, who gives might and (4) *Al-Mudhill*, The Humbler, who withholds honour from someone. The third pair is (5) *Al-Bāsiṭ*, The Spreader who causes the daylight to spread out and (6) *Al-Qābiḍ*, The Constrainer who rolls up the night. The fourth pair is (7) *Al-Muhyi*, The Bestower of Life who brings the dead to life and (8) *Al-Mumīt*, The Decreeer of death who cause death.

In the end, God summarized all of these names in two phrases: (1) "You have power over everything" and (2) "You provide for whom You please without reckoning." In other words, since He has claim over everything, He can give whatever He pleases to whomsoever He pleases without reckoning.

Say, 'O you mankind! Verily I am a messenger of Allah to you altogether; He is for whom is the dominion of the heavens and of the earth. There is no deity save He. It is He who gives life and puts to death.' Therefore believe in Allah and in His messenger, the unlettered prophet; he who believes in Allah and in His words. Therefore follow him so that perhaps you may be rightly guided. (The Quran, chapter *The Heights*, 7:158)

CHAPTER 4

المالك

Al-Malik

The King

Name of Quality

The word *malik* (*m-l-k*) in Arabic is composed of three letters. The same three letters also form the word *kalim* (*k-l-m*), which means "word." This signifies that *malik* (king) means the possessor of the word. God creates through His word, He gives through His word, and He bereaves through His word. The essence of faith lies in believing in God and His words.

The Word and the Mercy

Just as mercy is both specific and general, the word of God is also of two kinds, specific and general. Through the specific word, comes the specific mercy and likewise through the general word, comes the general mercy. The difference between the two is that the general mercy is for every creation of God while the specific mercy of God is for those who seek it through reverence of God (*taqwa*), purification (*tazkiya*) and through believing in God's signs (*īmān*).

To help achieve the specific mercy, a teacher usually assigns a specific litany to the disciple with which the disciple will recite in accordance to the instructions of his teacher. This in the end, will lead the disciple to fulfill one of the words which God loves (see Expansions Vol.4, chapter 7: *Trust and Love*).

CHAPTER 5

القدوس

Al-Quddūs

The All Holy

Name of Action

The name *Al-Quddūs* refers to God as the One who is absolutely pure. He is free from blemish or wrong, and He purifies and makes wholesome whomever He pleases by means of His Holy Spirit (*Rūh al-Quddūs*). His spirit is described as "holy" because it makes wholesome and negates all forms of flaws and blemishes.

There is another spirit of God which is called the Spirit of Trustworthiness (*Rūh al-Amīn*), this spirit has a different function from the Holy Spirit. Its function is to inspire the individual with a sense of trust and security and banish all forms of fear and insecurity. *Rūh al-Amīn* inspires its host with true faith and from this comes trust and security. While the Holy Spirit brings peace, the Spirit of Trustworthiness brings faith.

Revealed by the Spirit of Trustworthiness. (The Quran, chapter *The Poets*, 26:193)

The name *Al-Quddūs* also refers to God as the Lord of the Holy Spirit which in turn links to the Holy breath of God, The All Encompassing Merciful.

We gave Jesus the clear signs and We strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. (The Quran, chapter *The Cow*, 2:253)

5. *Al-Quddūs*

The Messiah son of Mary is but a messenger of God and His word which He delivered unto Mary and His spirit from Him. (The Quran, chapter *The Women*, 4:171)

When God said, 'Oh Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My blessing on you, and on your mother when I strengthen you by the spirit of the Holiness, and you spoke to Mankind in the cradle, and as an adult' (The Quran, chapter *The Heavenly Food Bowl*, 5:110)

Where God's word is fulfilled, the spirit comes. For example, Jesus is God's word and a spirit from Him. The role of the spirit is to strengthen the word and assist the soul of the person who has fulfilled the word in order to advance into higher spheres.

Say, 'It was the Holy Spirit who revealed it from your Lord, by the truth, in order to strengthen those who believe and a guidance and a glad tiding for those who have submitted themselves.' (The Quran, chapter *The Bee*, 16:102)

You will not find a people who believe in Allah and the last day loving with fondness those who defy Allah and His messenger even though they may be their fathers or their children or their brethren or their clan. These are the ones He has written faith in their hearts and has strengthened them with a spirit from Him. And He will make them enter into gardens beneath which the rivers flow to abide therein forever. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him and these are the party of Allah and verily the party of Allah, they are the prosperous. (The Quran, chapter *The Arguing Woman*, 58:22)

CHAPTER 6

السلام

Al-Salām

The Peace

Name of Action

Al-Salām refers to God as the source of peace. The word peace signifies a state of wholesomeness; therefore this name also means "The All Wholesome." God bestows wholesomeness on whoever He pleases. Wholesomeness, with regards to the creation, coincides with being in one's natural disposition (*fiṭra*). As long as one remains in his or her natural disposition, he or she will live in peace.

Go hence both of you to him and say, 'We are messengers of your Lord therefore send with us the children of Israel and do not afflict them with any more punishment. Verily we have come to you with a sign from Your Lord and the peace is on him who follows the guidance.' (The Quran, chapter *Ta-Ha*, 20:47)

The "guidance" in this verse refers to one's state of natural disposition. This means that as long as you are in your natural disposition, the peace is with you and God is present with you. If your natural disposition changes, peace moves away from you, God is far from you, and tribulation will come over you.

Submission and Peace

The word "peace" (*salām*) has the same root as submission

6. *Al-Salām*

(*taslīm*): *s-l-m*. Thus the means of preserving your natural disposition is submission to God. If you submit, you are in peace because you will preserve your natural disposition. If you do not submit, you will risk changing it, which will invite trial and distress. Your natural disposition will return back and with it peace and the presence of God when you submit again.

The root of the word *salām* means natural disposition, submission, peace and God as the source of peace. It is a state of tranquility within the heart and the soul which stems from the harmonious union between the word and The Holy Spirit. Thus *salām* is an aspect of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit brought down from your Lord by the truth in order to strengthen those who believe and a guidance and a glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves to God. (The Quran, chapter *The Bee*, 16:47)

When a person is found to be in his or her natural disposition, God breathes upon him or her His Holy Spirit and a sense of peace and tranquility come over him or her. The word "holy" means wholesome and pure, thus the function of The Holy Spirit is to purify and make wholesome by removing from the individual all causes of indisposition like sickness, veils, sins, grief and fear.

Peace be on him on the day he is born on the day he dies and on the day he will be raised alive. (The Quran, chapter *Mary*, 19:16)

The Peace be on me on the day I was born, and on the day I die and on the day I will be raised alive. (The Quran, chapter *Mary*, 19:33)

Peace! A word from a Lord Most Merciful. (The Quran, chapter *Ya-Sin*, 36:58)

CHAPTER 7

المؤمن

Al-Mu'min

The Inspirer of Faith

Name of Action

In many places in the Quran we find the word peace and faith mentioned together. Faith in God and His word removes fear from the heart of the believer and thereby it contributes to the stillness of the heart and the soul. The increase of hope and optimism will negate despair. Faith in God and His word gives an enduring tranquility, unlike anything else.

The six items of faith are: (1) faith in God and His words; (2) faith in His angels because they are the bearers of the word of God; (3) faith in His revealed books because they contain the word of God; (4) faith in His messengers because they are the recipients of the word of God; (5) faith in destiny because it is the word of God; (6) faith in the life of the hereafter because it is where the word of God will manifest itself in fullness.

When God wishes to inspire someone with faith, He will inspire into him or her Trustworthiness (*Rūh al-Amn*). Consequently a sense of trust, security and tranquility comes into the individuals heart.

Revealed by the most trustworthy spirit. (The Quran, chapter *The Poets*, 26:193)

7. *Al-Mu'min*

Whosoever disbelieves in God after believing in Him except one who is compelled to do so yet his heart remains tranquil through the faith in God. (The Quran, chapter *The Bee*, 16:106)

Those who have faith in their hearts find tranquility through the remembrance of God. Truly it is only through the remembrance of God that the hearts find tranquility. (The Quran, chapter *The Thunder*, 13:28)

Therefore believe in God and His messenger, the Prophet, the unlettered prophet, he who believes in God and His words. (The Quran, chapter *The Heights*, 7:158)

The piety [*al-birr*] does not consist of turning your faces towards the east and the west, but the pious is the one who believes in Allah and in the last day and the angels and in the book and in the prophets; and who gives the wealth out of His love to the near of kin and to the orphans and to the needy ones and to the wayfarer and to the beggars and in freeing the slaves and who establishes the prayer and gives out the sanctifying dues and those who fulfill the promise when they make a promise and those who are patient in the adversity and in the affliction and during the strife. Verily those are the ones who are truthful and those are the ones who have guarded their own souls. (The Quran, chapter *The Cow*, 2:177)

CHAPTER 8

المهيمن

Al-Muhyaymin

The Superseder

Name of Action

The name *Al-Muhyaymin* refers to the supreme will of God which overtakes every other will or plan. This characteristic of God is reflected in the overriding strength of the Holy Spirit. Likewise, anything that is strengthened by the Holy Spirit will surely supersede everything else.

Then We sent unto you the book by truth testifying to that which went before it from the book and superseding above it.
(The Quran, chapter *The Heavenly Food Bowl*, 5:48)

God's will supersedes every other will and His word overrides all other words.

CHAPTER 9

العزیز

Al-'Azīz

The All Mighty

Name of quality

The name *Al-'Azīz* refers to the might of God. Might is a quality which is unassailable due to the fact that He is flawless and well defended. He does not need help of any kind from anyone for if he did, then He would not be mighty, anyone in need is under the power of the need and the one from whom he seeks help. God described His book as a mighty book because of its flawlessness so that no one can find any way to attack its integrity.

Verily those who disbelieved in the remembrance when it came to them [let them know] that it truly is a book unassailable. Falsehood does not come to it from before it or from behind it. It is sent down from one All Wise, All Praise-Worthy.
(The Quran, chapter *Explained in Detail*, 41:41-42)

God's person (*dhāt*) is unassailable and so are his His words.

Whoever is seeking the might, verily all the might belongs to Allah. To Him mounts up the good word and the good deed He raises it up and those who are scheming the evil deeds, for them is a formidable punishment and it is this very scheme of theirs that it is going to waste. (The Quran, chapter *Originator of Creation*, 35:10)

They who take the disbelievers as allies instead of the believers, are they seeking from them the security then verily the security all together is for Allah. (The Quran, chapter *The Women*, 4:139)

CHAPTER 10

الجبار

Al-Jabbār

The All Compelling

Name of Action

Al-Jabbār is one of the names that depicts God's majestic quality. It purifies the believers from all expression of darkness like rebellion, aggression and vanity. This name goes back to commandment, no one can resist His Commandment.

And pleasing to his parents and never was he compelling disobedient. (The Quran, chapter *Mary*, 19:14)

And He has made me pleasing to my mother and has not made me compelling, miserable. (The Quran, chapter *Mary*, 19:32)

Like all other majestic names, it requires detachment between the Creator and the created. This means that the name *Al-Jabbār* requires the servant to stand as witness to the majesty of God but not assume this quality. When assumed, it makes the human miserable and disobedient.

CHAPTER II

المتكبر

Al-Mutakabbir

The All Supreme

Name of Action

The name *Al-Mutakabbir* is a name of God's majesty. It means that God has a right to exercise His supremacy over His creation and therefore requires the human being to stand as a witness.

Exalted be God above their idols. (The Quran, chapter *The Gathering*, 59:23)

This quality of God when assumed by human beings is described as arrogance. God does not accept anyone to share with Him his majestic qualities. There are no partners of God.

Verily those who belied Our signs and acted arrogantly towards them, for them the doors of the heaven will not be opened and they will not enter the garden until the camel passes through the eye of the needle and thus do We requite the evildoers. (The Quran, chapter *The Heights*, 7:40)

CHAPTER 12

الخالق

Al-Khāliq

The Creator

Name of Action

The name *Al-Khāliq* is never paired in the Quran with any other name of God except *Al-'Alīm*, The All Knowing, because only one who knows can create, and anyone who creates is certainly a knower.

Say, 'He will bring it to life the one who created it the first time, and it is He who is All knowing about all creation. (The Quran, chapter *Ya-Sin*, 37:79)

Verily, your lord is The Creator, The All Knowing. (The Quran, chapter *The Rocky Mountain*, 15:86)

Many other qualities of God emanate from the name *Al-Khāliq*, among them is Sustainer. Many blessings originate from this name. The first is existence; from non-existence, The Creator brought you into existence. The second is guidance; He has not created you to wander on your own. He guides you with a purpose and a direction. The third is sustenance; He provides you with your livelihood. The fourth, He heals you. The fifth is the alternation between death and life. The sixth, He redeems you from your errors and repairs your mistakes.

Does He not know what He has created while He it is The All

Subtle The All Acquainted? (The Quran, chapter *The Dominion*, 67:14)

Say, 'Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth?' Say, 'It is Allah.' Say, 'Have you then taken others as allies besides Him who do not possess any power to benefit or harm themselves.' Say, 'Is the blind equal to the seeing or is the darknesses equal to the light. Or have they ascribed partners to Allah who have created the likeness of His creation so that they are confused in the matter of creation.' Say, 'Allah is Creator of all things. It is He who is the one, the Overpowering.' (The Quran, chapter *The Thunder*, 13:16)

Who created me so it is He who guides me. And it is He who feeds me and provides drink to slake my thirst. And when I fall sick, it is He who heals me. And it is He who puts me to death and then brings me to life. And it is He who I fervently hope will absolve me of my faults on the day of rewarding. (The Quran, chapter *The Poets*, 26:78-82)

It is He for whom is the dominion of the heavens and the earth and He has not taken a child for Himself and there is no partner for Him in the Dominion. He has created everything and has measured it with a perfect measurement. (The Quran, chapter *The Criterion*, 25:2)

CHAPTER 13

الْبَارِي

Al-Bāri

The Moulder

Name of Action

This name of God comprises of two concepts with regards to God's creative action. This name usually occurs between two other names, *Al-Khāliq* (The Creator) and *Al-Muṣawwir* (The Giver of Image). It therefore constitutes a bridge between these two names, meaning that once God creates something, He moulds it in two ways or two stages. The first stage is known as *taswiya* which is a neutral, indefinite form. This is represented in the period before the created being is infused with the spirit. The second stage, known as *ta'dil*, which is the definite form into which that being evolves after receiving the spirit.

He who created you then made you proportionate then gave you an upright posture. In any shape which He pleases, He moulds you. (The Quran, chapter *The Tearing Apart*, 82:7-8)

Then We created the drop of liquid into a clot of blood, then We created the clot of blood into a piece of flesh, then We created the piece of flesh into bones, then We covered the bones with flesh, then We raised him up into a different creature. So blessed is Allah the best of creators. (The Quran, chapter *The Believers*, 23:14)

Then He made him even and breathed His spirit into him, and He made for you the hearing the sight and the understanding. Little is the thanks that you offer. (The Quran, chapter The Prostration, 32:9)

He who created it and then made it free and extensive. And He who measured it and then guided it. (The Quran, chapter *The Most High*, 87:2-3)

And then He inspired it to know its boundaries. Indeed he is prospered one who has sanctified it. (The Quran, chapter *The Sun*, 91:7-8)

Thus *Al-Bāri*, as a name of God consists of two of God's actions; first one is to mould the thing He's created into a undetermined form before He blows His spirit in that. The second action relates to the evolution of that form into a determined form once God has blown the spirit into it.

CHAPTER 14

المصوّر

Al-Muṣawwir

The Fashioner

Name of Action

The name *Al-Muṣawwir* means that God is the One who creates you, then makes you wholesome, and then fashions you into any form. He gives everyone a unique form which determines the unique way that every individual evolves and grows intellectually and aesthetically.

In any image which He pleases, He moulds you. (The Quran, chapter *The Tearing Apart*, 82:8)

The creative process involves three major stages: (1) designing, (2) fashioning and (3) imaging. Designing corresponds to God's intent to create while fashioning corresponds to the actual outlaying of the created being and designing it in its due proportions. Imaging corresponds to umbration and shading so that created beings take on particular colors and taste.

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the differences of your tongues and of your colors. Verily in that are signs for people who know. (The Quran, chapter *The Romans*, 30:22)

And in the earth are neighboring pieces of land and gardens of vines and crops and date and trees similar and dissimilar.

They are all watered with one water but we do make some better in taste than others. In that indeed there are signs for a people who understand. (The Quran, chapter *The Thunder*, 13:4)

He is Allah The Creator, The Moulder, The Fashioner, for Him are the most excellent names. All that is in the heavens and in the earth glorify Him and He is The All-mighty, The All-wise. (The Quran, chapter *The Gathering*, 59:24)

He it is who fashions you in the wombs in the manner He pleases. There is no deity save He, The All Mighty, The All Wise. (The Quran, chapter *The Family of Imran*, 3:6)

We indeed created you and We have instated you in the earth and We have made for you therein livelihood. How little is that you offer gratitude. (The Quran, chapter *The Heights*, 7:11)

CHAPTER 15

الغفار

Al-Ghaffār

The Oft Forgiving

Name of Action

The name *Al-Ghaffār* refers to the One who forgives as often as one seeks forgiveness from Him. We respond to this name by recognizing that our misdeeds, otherwise known as veils or sins, leave a negative impact on our heart and that this impact can be removed by God. God then responds to us by absolving us from the negative effects of our ill-deeds.

Seeking Forgiveness

Emotions, such as anger which leaves a blinding effect, must also have their traces removed through asking for forgiveness (*istighfār*).

And those who keep away from major sins and offenses and when they get angry, they ask for forgiveness from God. (The Quran, chapter *The Consultation*, 42:37)

And those who, when they commit an offensive act or otherwise wrong their own souls, they remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins and who forgives the sins except Allah as long as they do not persist on that which they have committed knowingly. (The Quran, chapter *The Family of Imran*, 3:135)

It must be noted that forgiving or absolving is a means of redressing wrongful actions and it extends to wrongful thoughts or intents devised by the heart and then executed by the limbs or the tongue. The classical example is making a partner with God. Anyone who makes partners with God, all his deeds are considered null and void; they can neither be corrected nor repaired. One can only correct something that went wrong with an existing matter. In this case, one who makes partners is considered non-existent and whatever he does is considered to be the same. However, if one believes in God as One and makes no partners with Him but incurs a sin by wrongful deed, the wrong can be redressed through *istighfār*.

Verily Allah does not forgive anyone that ascribes a partner to Him but He forgives anything besides that for whom He pleases. And whoever ascribes partners to Allah, he indeed has gone far astray. (The Quran, chapter *The Women*, 4:116)

The Quran also speaks of a three step process to obtain forgiveness: (1) repent, (2) renew your faith, and (3) take a positive action after a negative action.

And I am truly Oft Forgiving to the one who repents and believes and does a righteous deed and keeps on the right guidance. (The Quran, chapter *Ta-Ha*, 20:82)

Except such a one who turns to Allah in repentance and reaffirms his belief and does a righteous deed. Verily it is they whose evil deeds are replaced by Allah with virtuous deeds and Allah surely is Oft-Forgiving, All Merciful. (The Quran, chapter *The Criterion*, 25:70)

But whoever turns to Allah in repentance and he affirms his belief and does a righteous deed, then perhaps he might be of those who prosper. (The Quran, chapter *The Stories*, 28:67)

Except one who repents and believes and act righteous deeds.

Verily they will enter the garden and they will not be cheated a thing. (The Quran, chapter *Mary*, 19:60)

There are multiple benefits attached to these steps: abundance of provision and abundance of progeny. Another way of responding to this name is to forgive those whom have wronged you and God will respond to you by forgiving you.

one of you, Our messengers will take his soul; and they never fall short of their obligation. (The Quran, chapter *The Cattle*, 6:61)

The name *Al-Qahhār* is not meant to be assumed by the creation, nor used in a litany except in conjunction with another name of God.

CHAPTER 16

القهار

Al-Qahhār

The All Overpowering

Name of Action

The name *Al-Qahhār* forms a trio with two other names of God: *Allāh* (Personal Name of God) and *Al-Wāḥid* (The One). The Personal Name of God, *Allāh*, is defined by two attributes: His unity and His overwhelming power above His creation. From the point of view of unity, He is One with them. From the point of view of His overwhelming power, He is separate from them and above them. Thus the name *Al-Wāḥid* reflects His beauty (unity), while the name *Al-Qahhār* reflects His majesty (overwhelming power).

Usually, the names of God are in pairs, these three names are the only names in sets of three in the Quran:

O my two companions of prison, are multiple and diverse Lords better or Allah, The One, The All Overpowering? (The Quran, chapter *Joseph*, 12:39)

The day when they will all stand out when nothing is hidden from Allah about them. For whom is the dominion today? It is for Allah, the One The All Overpowering. (The Quran, chapter *The Forgiver*, 40:16)

And He is All Overpowering over His slaves and He sends guardians [angels] over you until when the death comes upon