

THE NINETY-NINE NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

By: Iman Al-Ghazzali

"We shall show them Our Signs upon the horizons and within themselves until it is clear to them that it is the Real (the Truth)" (41:53).

God Self-disclosed through the manifestation of the Most Beautiful Names of which one Tradition relates the following Ninety-Nine Names of Allâh.

Allâh

"He is God; there is no god but He...." (59:22)

God is unique in terms of true Being. No other being can be said to exist `of itself'. In fact, "Everything perishes except His Presence (Face)" (28:88). It is probable that the name Allâh occurs to indicate the Absolute in the same way that proper nouns denote particular things. Everything that can be said, however, in respect of the origin of the word is from the human point of view, that is, relative and arbitrary.

As God breathed His Spirit on the human form it can aspire to actualize God's Qualities but the possibility of this occurring is limited and relative to our own natural disposition--which God gave us--and the extent of our directing our motivations and perceptions towards this goal. However, gaining knowledge of God's Most Beautiful Names and assuming them as noble or praiseworthy character traits whatever possible makes us in no way comparable to God's likeness. The Quran clearly states, "Naught is as His likeness" (16:74) nor should one consider that sharing in every quality means a likeness. Likeness is defined as sharing in a specific thing and in essence. A horse and a human being may both be swift but their likeness ends here.

The meaning of the name Allâh is so specific that it is inconceivable that there could be any sharing of the Name whether it be metaphorically or literally. In view of this, the rest of the Names are described as being the Names of Allâh and are defined in relation to Allâh. One may say that the Patient, the Compeller, and the Sovereign are among the Names of Allâh but one cannot say that Allâh is one of the Names of the Patient, the Compeller, the Sovereign. This is because the Name Allâh, God, is more indicative of the true nature of the meaning of divinity and is, therefore, more specific. As a result, one dispenses with trying to define it by something else whereas the other Names are defined in relationship to the Name Allâh. As the Quran says, "Do you know of any other that can be named with His Name?" (19:65)

1 Al-Rahmân: The Merciful

2 Al-Rahîm: The Compassionate

"In the Name of God, the Merciful (al-Rahmân), the Compassionate (al-Rahîm)...."
(1:1)

The Merciful and the Compassionate are qualities derived from rahamâ (mercy). The concept of mercy requires that there be an object of mercy, someone or something in

need. The needs of the needy are satisfied through the Merciful without any intention, choosing, willing, or asking by the needy one. The mercy of the Merciful is perfect in the sense that God not only wills the satisfaction of the needs of the needy, which shows concern, but actually satisfies them. The Merciful is all-inclusive in that mercy is extended to the worthy and the unworthy alike and includes all their needs. There is a Tradition where the Messenger says, "God Most High has one hundred portions of mercy. He has given only one portion to the universe and that God has divided among all of creation." The feeling of mercy and compassion that God's creatures feel for each other is from this. The other ninety-nine portions are reserved for the Day of Judgment when God will bestow it upon the believers. The Quran says, "My mercy embraces everything" (7:156).

A distinction should be made between the meanings of the two qualities of the Merciful and the Compassionate. The basic meaning to be understood from the Merciful is a kind of mercy which is beyond the reach of human potential and provides the needs for the nafs or soul for all creatures in this world regardless of their worthiness. The Compassionate, on the other hand, is the quality that God manifests to the believers, "He is compassionate to the believers" (33:43). God shows compassion towards those who use their free will to choose His way in order to be saved in the Hereafter. This is why it is said God is compassionate towards His believers.

3 Al-Malik: The Sovereign

"So high exalted be God, the Sovereign (al-Malik)..." (20:114).

The Sovereign is the quality of being independent of all existing things while everything in existence is dependent upon it. Nothing can exist without God whether it be in respect of essence, qualities, existence, or continued being (baqâ`). Each and every thing derives its being from God or from something which is derived from God. Everything other than God is subject to God in respect to both its qualities and essence. But God has no need for anything. God, indeed, is the Sovereign in the absolute sense. In the sense of incomparability, God is absolutely independent of us. As an active quality, everything else is dependent upon God. God's kingdom consists of all possible things, including human beings. "To Him belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth" (2:107). The Messenger said, "God is the Lord and Sovereign of everything."

4 Al-Quddûs: The Holy

"All that is in the heavens and the earth magnifies God, the Sovereign, the Holy (al-Quddûs)" (62:1).

The Holy is God's quality of being above every description of which human perception can perceive. It is beyond what the imagination can grasp. Even the innermost consciousness cannot pervade and thereby have an understanding of the Holy, the noble character trait manifested by Prophet Jesus to raise the dead to life. It is a quality unique unto God alone for it is to be without blemish, shortcoming, or weakness.

5 Al-Salâm: The Flawless

"...the Flawless (al-Salâm)..." (59:23)

The Flawless is God's quality of lacking all imperfection or any trace of deficiency. There is no perfect, unimpaired state of being in existence except that which is ascribed to and emanates from God. The actions of the Flawless are free from absolute negative or base actions. Absolute evil is evil desired for its own sake and not for a greater good resulting from it. There is no natural evil in existence which has this description. The Flawless persists unfaltering, uninterrupted until eternity. In terms of as active quality, as-Salâm is the giver of peace and salvation at the beginning of the creation and at the time of the resurrection. Pronouncing the blessing of peace, `As-salâm alaykum' upon His creatures is also a manifestation of al-Salâm.

6 Al-Mu'min: The Giver of Faith

"...the Giver of Faith (al-Mu'min)..." (59:23).

The Giver of Faith is God's quality of giving safety and security. It blocks the avenues leading to fear of anything other than God. Only when there is fear of anything but God does the concept of safety become important. Otherwise, those who seek refuge in the Giver of Faith from fear of anything other than God are safe and secure. Safety and security in the absolute sense are inconceivable unless they be derived from God.

7 Al-Muhaymin: The Guardian

"...the Guardian (al-Muhaymin)..." (59:23).

The meaning of the Guardian in respect of God is that God brings about the evolution and growth of God's creation. The Guardian brings these about through knowledge, control, and protection. No one combines these qualities in an absolute and perfect sense other than God.

8 Al-`Azîz: The Incomparable

"...the Incomparable (al-`Azîz)..." (59:23).

God is the Incomparable in terms of importance, usefulness and inaccessibility. Whatever lacks any of these three qualities (importance, usefulness, and inaccessibility) cannot be described by the name of the incomparable (`Azîz). Being incomparable means being rare, very precious, and difficult to obtain. God is so rare that He is absolutely unique, so necessary that nothing would exist without Him, so inaccessible that God alone can know Himself.

There are many things in the universe of which it can be said that their usefulness is limited. They cannot be called incomparable (`Azîz). There are many things which have great importance, abundant usefulness, and are incomparable in this world. If approaching it is not difficult, however, one still cannot call it incomparable. An example of this is the sun which has no equal. This is also true of the earth. The usefulness of and need for each of them is great, to say the least. Yet the fact remains that they cannot be characterized in terms of incomparability since it is easy to observe them. That is, they are not unapproachable. Therefore, it is necessary that these three characteristics be combined before one can refer to something as being incomparable. Our absolute need exists for God alone. No one really knows God except God.

9 Al-Jabbâr: The Compeller

"...the Compeller (al-Jabbâr)..." (59:23).

The Compeller is God's quality of being effective in terms of will power over everyone and everything while no will power is effective over It. This force is the one from whose grasp no one is free. God's Will is absolute and this magnifies God over every other being. Through His Will, God compels His creatures to obey His counseling to the positive (amr bi'l ma`rûf) or commands and trying to prevent the development of the negative (nahy `An al-munkar) or prohibitions. These counsels are part of the instinctive nature within beings and things. They predispose creatures to follow God's Will, the highest stage of which is to become conscious of self through which the creature then bears witness to the Creator. Certainly God coerces everyone, but no one coerces Him. There is not a single person in the world who approximates God's power and inaccessibility. According to Algazel, this quality best describes Muhammad, peace and the mercy of God be upon him.

10 Al-Mutakabbir: The Proud

"...the Proud (al-Mutakabbir)..." (59:23).

God's quality of being the Proud considers everything less in comparison to its own essence. Majesty and glory belong to God alone. From this quality comes the command to magnify God by saying the takbîr, Allâhu akbar, God is Greater. This is pride in the purest sense of the word. It is inconceivable of anyone except God in an absolute sense.

11 Al-Khâliq:The Creator

12 Al-Bâri':The Maker of Perfect Harmony

13 Al-Musawwir:The Shaper of Unique Beauty

"God is the Creator (al-Khâliq), the Maker of Perfect Harmony (al-Bâri'), the Shaper of Unique Beauty (al-Musawwir)..." (59:24).

One may think that the qualities manifest in the Creator, the Maker of Perfect Harmony, and the Shaper of Unique Beauty are synonymous and that each one is derived from the act of creating and bringing into being. But this is not so. The fact of the matter is that everything which emerges from non-existence into existence, first of all, requires a planning stage (the Creator), then the actual bringing into being in a harmonious order according to the plan (the Maker of Perfect Harmony), and, thirdly, the shaper of the plan through a unique beauty (the Shaper of Unique Beauty). God manifests the quality of the Creator in as much as He is the One who plans and determines--from nothing--without any model. He establishes and defines the states of things before they come into existence. This includes the conditions and sustenance for all that He creates establishing the how, when, and where creation is to take place. Everything is given goodness and wisdom from the beginning and follows an order or plan. There are no accidents. God neither needs the creation nor does God benefit from it. The reason for creation is perhaps to bear witness to God's eternal Will of greatness and power and to see the reflection of God's beauty and perfection.

God manifests the quality of the Maker of Perfect Harmony by bringing into being in perfect harmony not only each thing within itself but with each and every other creature in relation to each other, as well. Everything is interconnected. When one part of the cycle is effected, all parts are effected because the function of one thing depends on the function of the others.

God manifests the quality of the Shaper of Unique Beauty in view of the fact that the originations are shaped in forms of unique beauty. Without model, this quality of God shapes everything perfectly at the same time that no two things are exactly alike in every way. Each and every creation is a choice creation reflecting God's infinite mercy and wisdom.

14 Al-Ghaffâr: The Forgiver

"...And I call you to the Incomparable, the Forgiver (al-Ghaffâr)" (40:42).

The Forgiver is God's quality that makes manifest what is noble and hides what is disgraceful. The sins of human beings are among the disgraceful things which the Forgiver hides by covering over them in this world and disregarding their punishment in the hereafter. According to Algazel, this name best defines Jesus, peace be upon him.

15 Al-Qahhâr: The Subduer

"The day they come forth and naught of theirs is hidden from God. `Whose is the kingdom today?' `God, the Unique, the Subduer' (al-Qahhar)"(40:16).

The Subduer is the quality of God that breaks the backs of God's enemies. The Subduer dominates over them by killing and humiliating them. Everything in existence is subjected to the Subduer's dominance and power. The strength and power of the Subduer is counterbalanced by the quality of the Subtle (al-Latîf) for they are contained one within the other.

16 Al-Wahhâb: The Bestower

"...`Our Lord! Let our hearts not deviate now that You have guided us but grant us mercy from Your own presence for You are the Bestower' (al-Wahhâb)" (3:8).

A gift is a present that is given free of thought of compensation or any other selfish interests. The Bestower is the quality of God that gives many gifts of this nature. Generosity, gifts, and presents of this kind are truly inconceivable other than from God the Bestower which gives every needy person that which is needed and does this without regard to compensation or other selfish interests either now or later.

17 Al-Razzâq: The Provider

"...And He is the Provider (al-Razzâq)..." (51:58).

The Provider is that quality of God which creates the means of sustenance as well as the need for it and enjoyment of it. This includes the ability to gain nourishment from food or knowledge for there are two kinds of sustenance: the first is evident like food and the

need for it is caused to exist in physical bodies to which it provides strength for the human body for a limited period of time. The other is hidden and consists of knowledge. The need for this is caused to exist in the human heart and inner self. It is the more noble of the two kinds of sustenance. It is a fruit which, once eaten, can bring eternal life. The Provider is the quality which assumes responsibility for the creation of both types of sustenance, graciously making them available to both bodies and the human heart. "Our Lord, You have not created this universe in vain"

(3:191). The Provider grants ample sustenance to some and a measured amount to others.

18 Al-Fattâh: The Opener

"...Our Lord will gather us together and will in the end decide" (34:26).

The Opener is the quality of God by which means everything that is closed is opened and through the guidance of which everything that is unclear is made clear. The quality connotes three meanings: first, the victorious who vanquishes difficulties and brings about victory; second, the one who makes decisions known; and third, the revealer who discloses that which had been concealed. At times the Opener causes kingdoms to be conquered for God's Prophets. It takes them out of the hands of God's enemies and says, "Lo! We have given you (oh Muhammad) a clear victory (literally, opening) that God may forgive you" (48:1).

19 Al-`Alîm: The Knower

"...and of all things He is the Knower (al-`Alîm)" (2:29).

The meaning of the Knower is obvious. It is God who knows: the hidden and the manifest, the small and the great, first and last, inception and outcome, in the most complete manner possible. The perfection of this quality is to fully comprehend the knowledge of everything, including both the manifest and the hidden, that of little and that of great importance, the first and the last, the end and the beginning. All being is present at all times in the knowledge of the Knower. This comprehensive knowledge in terms of clarity and disclosure is the most perfect knowledge. It is possible in view of the fact that it is inconceivable to find one more observing and disclosing than the Knower. Furthermore, the Knower's knowledge, which is to know everything that is knowable in a perfect manner, cannot be derived from objects of knowledge. Rather, objects of knowledge are derived from it. A common Arabic expression is Allâh al-`Alîm, `God knows best'.

20 Al-Qâbidh: The Constrictor

21 Al-Bâsit: The Expander

"...God constricts and expands..." (2:245).

The Constrictor-Expander are qualities of God that takes the souls of people at the time of death and places souls in human bodies at the time of the inception of life. The Constrictor withholds the means of subsistence and of other things from his servants by

His graciousness and wisdom. It takes the souls at the time of death. The Expander, on the other hand, is that quality which amplifies or makes plentiful the means of subsistence to whomsoever God will through God's liberality and mercy and who breathes the souls in the bodies at the time of their being given life. The Constrictor-Expander takes alms from the rich and gives sustenance to those without resources. The Constrictor oppresses human hearts and makes them heavy by revealing to them how unconcerned, exalted and majestic God is. The Expander then delights them with charitable gifts, kindness, and beauty.

22 Al-Khâfidh: The Abaser

23 Al-Râfi` : The Exalter

"When the Event Inevitable comes to pass then will no soul entertain falsehood concerning its coming. Many will it abase and many will it exalt" (56:1-3).

The Abaser abases the unbelievers by means of misfortune. The Exalter exalts the believers by means of good fortune. God exalts believers by drawing them near to Him. God abases His enemies by isolating them from Himself.

24 Al-Mu`izz: The Honorer

25 Al-Mudhill: The Dishonorer

"You honor whomsoever You like and dishonor ..." (3:26).

God raises to honor those from whose heart the veil is lifted so that they come to know the beauty of God's Presence, who are granted contentment so that as they have no need for the things of God's creation, and who are provided strength and support so that they may control their own disposition. God gives them immediate dominion. God will also raise them to honor in the Hereafter in terms of their gaining access to God. God will call for them, saying, "Oh soul at peace! Return unto your Lord!" (89:27).

The dishonored is the one to whom God speaks and says, "But you tempted one another and hesitated and doubted and fantasies deluded you until the command of God came to pass and the deceiver deceived you concerning God; so this day no ransom can be taken for you..." (57:14). This is the utmost limit of dishonor.

26 Al-Samî` : The All-Hearing

"Behold! a woman of `Imran said, `Oh my Lord! I do dedicate unto You what is in my womb for Your special service so accept this of me for You are the All-Hearing (al-Samî`)" (3:35).

The All-Hearing is the quality of God's perception from which nothing audible escapes even if it is silent. The All-Hearing is conscious of an ant creeping on a huge boulder in the pitch-dark of night. It hears the praise of those who praise God and rewards them, hears the invocations of those who invoke God and answers them. The All-Hearing hears without having the usual auditory channels. The hearing of the All-Hearing is not to be compared with that hearing to which ordinary speech can gain access. This

hearing is of such a nature that by it the perfection of the names and qualities of all things heard is disclosed. It is beyond our imagination, free of any change that may affect it when audible things occur and above that which is heard by the human ear or some device and instrument. Whoever does not examine this view closely will certainly fall into the snare of anthropomorphism. Therefore, we must be on our guard and watch carefully in this matter.

27 Al-Basîr: The All-Seeing

"...God is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing (al-Basîr)" (4:58).

The All-Seeing is a quality which watches and observes things in such a way that nothing escapes its attention including even what is under the earth. Moreover, it is free of any dependence upon a pupil of the eye, eyelids, or the imprinting of forms and colors upon the eye as human vision is. The perfection of qualities of visible things is disclosed to the All-Seeing. This is more clear than what can be grasped by the perception of a sense of sight which is limited to the appearance of things visible.

28 Al-Hakam: The Arbiter

"...Now surely His alone as the Master is the Judgment..." (6:62).

The Arbiter is like an arbitrating magistrate and an avenging judge whose decisions no one overturns or corrects. Among The Arbiter's rulings in respect to the human being are that "the human being has only that for which he strives and that his effort will be seen,"(53:39-40) and that "the righteous verily will meet happiness while the wicked verily will be in hell" (82:13-14). The Arbiter's ruling regarding happiness for the righteous and misery for the wicked is that God makes good or evil, positive or negative, a cause which leads those who practice them to happiness or misery. In a similar way, God makes medication and poison the causes which lead those who take them to recovery or death. If the meaning of ruling is to arrange causes to their effects, then God is the absolute arbiter because God is the cause of all causes in general and in particular. The Divine Decree and predestination (qada' wa qadar) issue from the Arbiter. Causes are directed to the effects in the Arbiter's judgment. The decree (qada') provides the universal causes--original, fixed, and stable--like the earth, the heavens, the stars, the celestial bodies, and their harmonious and eternal movements which do not change in their orbit and do not cease to exist "until the term prescribed is run" (2:235). God says, "Then He ordained them seven heavens in two days and inspired in each heaven its mandate" (41:12). The Arbiter applies these causes with their harmonious, defined, planned, and tangible movements to the effects resulting from them, moment after moment. This is known as predestination (qadar). The ruling of the Arbiter is the initial planning and the first command which is like "a twinkling of the eye" (16:77). In other words, the decree posits universal and constant causes while predestination applies these universal causes with their foreordained and measured movements to their effects, numbered and defined, according to a determined measure which neither increases nor decreases. This is how nothing escapes from God's decree and predestination.

29 Al-`Adl: The Just

"Verily God commands justice.." (16:92).

Those who do not know their own sense of justice cannot know the Just. Those who are not aware of their actions cannot know their sense of justice. In order to understand this quality, human beings must have a comprehensive knowledge of the actions of God ranging from the highest kingdom of the heavens to the farthest reaches of the earth. This knowledge results where they do not see "any fault in the creation of the Merciful" and then look again at it. They see no flaw. Then they look yet again and "(their) sight returns unto (them) weakened and made dim," (67:3) having been dazzled by God and bewildered by the symmetry and systematic order. In this condition they love God since they know something of the "meaning" of God's justice. God created the parts of everything in existence, both the physical and the spiritual and gave to each one its own character. In doing this He showed His generosity. He also placed each one in a rank suitable to it. In doing this He was the Just. Some of the important bodies in the world are the earth, water, the atmosphere, the heavens, and the stars. He created them and placed them in their proper rank. He placed the earth in the lowest position. He put water above it. The atmosphere is above water and the heavens are above the atmosphere. If this order were reversed, certainly the system would be ineffective. If only our knowledge of the wonders of the universe were complete and if only we would allow ourself time to reflect on them and the other bodies surrounding them, then we would be among those of whom God said, "We will show them Our Signs upon the horizons and within themselves until it is clear to them that it is the Real (the Truth)" (41:53). How can we be one of those of whom He said, "Thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty?" (6:75). How can "the gates of heaven be opened," (54:11) to those who are completely absorbed in the anxiety of this world, those who are enslaved by greed and passion?

30 Al-Latîf: The Subtle

"...He is the Subtle (al-Latif)... " (6:103).

The one worthy of this Name is the one who knows the fine points of those things that are beneficial as well as their obscurities, niceties, and subtleties and who then makes them available to the deserving one in a gentle rather than a harsh manner. The real meaning of the Subtle combines gentleness in action with delicacy of perception. The perfection of the Subtle in respect of knowledge and activity is inconceivable except for God. The Subtle's comprehension of the fine points and the hidden aspects cannot be explained. Suffice it to say that the hidden is as open to His knowledge as is the manifest. There is absolutely no distinction between them. His gentleness and subtlety in His actions are also boundless. The only one who knows the subtlety in respect of His work is the one who knows the details of His actions and the fine points of His gentleness in respect of them. One's knowledge of the meaning of the quality of being the Subtle is commensurate with one's knowledge of these things.

31 Al-Khabîr: The Aware

"...and none can tell you the Truth like the Aware (al-Khabîr).. " (35:14).

The Aware is the quality from which no unconscious content is hidden. Nothing occurs in either the physical or spiritual domain, not an atom is set in motion or becomes still, not a breath is disturbed nor silenced without the Aware's knowledge of it. The quality is similar to that of the Knower (al-`Alîm), both being attributes of knowledge, but the Aware's knowledge is related to that which is outwardly unknown or unconscious. It is called awareness or consciousness and the one possessing it is called aware or conscious.

32 Al-Halîm: The Forebearer

"...Forebearing (halîm) (64:17).

The Forebearer is a quality which shows neither anger nor rage upon witnessing disobedience and the violation of God's commands. Possessing a sense of moral reasonableness, it is not prompted by haste and recklessness to take swift vengeance even though it has unlimited power to do so. God said, "If God took mankind to task by that which they deserve, He would not leave a living creature on the surface of the earth" (35:45).

33 Al-`Adhîm: The Magnificent

"...God is the Magnificent (al-`Adhîm)" (2:105).

The word 'magnificence' is usually applied to physical bodies. Thus one says, "This body is great" or "this body is greater than that body," if it is more extended in respect to length, width, and depth. The Magnificent is of two types: first, what fills the eye and draws its attention; and second, what sight cannot encompass due to the extent of an objects' extremities.

It should be noted that there are also differences among objects of intellectual perception. Human intellect completely grasps the core of the real nature of some of them and falls short in the case of others. That which intellect falls short of grasping completely falls into two categories: first, that which some may conceivably grasp although the understanding of the majority falls short of it; and second, that concerning which the intellect cannot conceivably completely grasp the core of its real nature. This last one is the absolute Magnificent, the quality of which exceeds all the limits of human understanding and that is God.

34 Al-Ghafûr: The Concealer of Faults

"...For God is the Concealer of Faults (ghafûr)..." (2:173).

The Concealer of Faults has a meaning similar to that of the Forgiver (al-Ghaffâr) but the Concealer of Faults denotes an extensiveness of a different kind from that denoted by the Forgiver (al-Ghaffâr). Certainly the Forgiver denotes an extreme degree of forgiveness in respect of forgiveness that is repeated time after time. The Concealer of Faults forgives perfectly and completely and thereby reaches the ultimate degree of forgiveness.

35 Al-Shakûr: The Rewarder of Thankfulness

"...Rewarder of Thankfulness (shakûr)" (35:30).

The Rewarder of Thankfulness rewards even a few pious deeds many times over. It gives limitless happiness in the life to come for actions undertaken during a limited period. One who rewards the good deed many times over is said to be thankful for that good deed. One who praises the performer of this good deed is also said to be thankful for it. If you consider the multiplication factor in reward, only God is absolutely the Rewarder of Thankfulness. His multiplication of reward is unrestrained and unlimited for the blessings of Paradise are infinite. God says, "Eat and drink at ease for that which you sent on before you in past days" (69:24). As an attribute of action, it is that quality which gives much as reward for little and as an attribute of speech, it proclaims the eulogy of whomsoever obeys. Furthermore, if you consider the factor of praise to be the criterion, you will discover that in the human realm one's praises are directed to a second party, when God praises the actions of His servants. In doing this, God is actually praising His own actions, since the actions of human beings are a part of God's creation. If one is given something and then praises the giver, one may say that he is thankful. But the one who gives and then goes on to shower praises upon the recipient certainly is more worthy of being called a thankful person. The praise of God upon His people is exemplified by His saying, ". . . Men who remember God much and women who remember, God has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward," (33:35) and by His saying, "How excellent a slave! He was ever turning in repentance (to his Lord)," (38:41) and by other verses of this nature.

36 Al-`Alî: The Highest

"Glorify the name of your Lord the Highest (al-`Alî)" (87:1).

The Highest is that quality above which there is no rank. All the other ranks are inferior to the Highest. The Highest refers to height. Height refers to the concept of elevation. Elevation is the opposite of lowness. It may be conceived in terms of perceptible height or level or in terms of some sort of rational order. Everything that can be described as being "above" in respect of space possesses spatial highness and everything that can be described as being "above" in terms of rank may be said to have a highness exceeding all others.

37 Al-Kabîr: The Great

"He knows the Unseen and that which is open. He is the Great (al-Kabîr)..." (13:9).

Greatness is an expression of the perfection of essence. The perfection of essence is traceable to two things. First of all, its perpetuity, both past and future. Every existent is deficient so that sooner or later it is interrupted by a period of non-existence. For this reason one says of a person who has lived a long life that he is great, that is to say, great of age. If, then, the being whose period of existence is lengthy, even though its actual duration is limited, is said to be great, then the one who always will be and always has been, the one in relation to whom non-existence is inconceivable, is more worthy of being called the Great. The second is that the existence from which all beings emanate is God's Being. If the one whose existence is complete in itself is Perfect and Great, then the one from whom the existence of all existing things originated is more worthy of being called perfect and great.

38 Al-Hafîdh: The Preserver

"... a Preserver (hafîdh)" (34:21).

There is nothing in the heavens and the earth which is not preserved by the Preserver whether it be the weight of an atom or the planets in the heavens. The Preserver preserves what God's servants do of good or evil as well as the heavens and the earth through His power. The preservation of these is not a burden.

This can be understood only by understanding the meaning of preservation which may be taken in two ways. First of all, preservation means perpetuating the existence of existing things and sustaining them, which is the opposite of destroying them. God is the preserver of the heavens, the earth, the angels, and all things in existence, regardless of whether the period of their continuation be long or short, such as animals, vegetation, and other similar things.

The second way in which this term can be understood, and it is more evident, is preserving through safeguarding each being from those things which are inherently its opposite. This refers, for example, to the natural enmity that exists between water and fire for either water extinguishes fire or else fire, by prevailing, causes water to change in such a way that it becomes steam and then air.

39 Al-Muqât: The Maintainer

"... God maintains all things" (4:85).

The Maintainer maintains creatures by keeping them in an existing state. This requires both knowledge and power. The argument for this interpretation is in the words of God, "God maintains all things," (4:85)--that is to say, God is knowledgeable of and has power over everything. The meaning of the Maintainer would then refer back to what is meant by power and knowledge. In terms of this meaning, the quality of the Maintainer is more complete than the quality of the Able (al-Qâdir) alone and the Knower (al-`Alîm) alone because it indicates a composite of the other meanings. Therefore this name is not synonymous with either of these two.

40 Al-Hasîb: The Reckoner

"...and God is enough as Reckoner" (4:6).

The Reckoner is the quality which suffices. As an active attribute, it creates what is sufficient for God's servants. As an attribute of speech, God asks of whomsoever is submissive to the Law to account for what he does of the positive and of the negative. The Reckoner is of such a nature that when one is so blessed with this quality, one has everything. It is inconceivable that anyone but God would have this quality in an absolute sense. The reason is that everything God created requires sufficiency of its needs in order to continue being. God alone is sufficient for everything, not just for some things. That is to say, God alone is the Reckoner. God is the cause of the being of things, their continuation, and their perfection.

41 Al-Jalîl: The Majestic

The qualities of majesty include strength, dominion, holiness, knowledge, wealth, power and so forth. The one who combines all of them in their person is absolutely majestic. If one is characterized by only some of them, one's majesty is commensurate with the attainment of that quality. The absolutely majestic is God alone. It may be said that al-Kabîr, the Great, is traceable to the perfection of the essence, al-Jalîl, the Majestic, to the perfection of the qualities and al-`Adhîm, the Magnificent, to the perfection of essence and qualities. This is what is perceived by intellectual insight provided that it encompasses intellectual perception and not the reverse.

Furthermore, when the attributes of majesty are perceived by intellectual perception, majesty is called beauty. The one who is characterized by it is called beautiful. The name al-Jamîl, the Beautiful, was used originally in regard to whatever was visible. Then it was transferred to the inner form which is perceived by insight. Thus one speaks of conduct of being good and beautiful. One says that one's character is beautiful and that beauty is perceived by the powers of insight and not by physical sight. Indeed, inner forms are seen as beautiful by the inner powers of a perceiver if they are perfect and harmoniously proportionate, combine all the perfections suitable to them as they ought to, in such a manner as they should be combined. When people gaze upon them, they experience greater joy, delight, and emotion than those who gaze through external sight alone. Therefore, the absolutely and authentically beautiful one is God alone for all the beauty, perfection, splendor, and attractiveness in this world are from the lights of God's essence and the traces of God's qualities. Nothing in the whole of existence has absolute perfection either actually or potentially except God. For this reason, those who know God and contemplate God's beauty experience such delight, happiness, joy, and pleasure that they disdain the delights of paradise as well as the beauty of interior meaning perceived by intellectual perception. Moreover, there is no comparison between the beauty of the external forms and the beauty of interior meaning perceived by intellectual perception. Stressing the concept of inner beauty distinguishes the Majestic (al-Jalîl) from the Proud (al-Mutakabbir) and the Magnificent (al-`Adhîm).

42 Al-Karîm: The Generous

"...the Generous (al-Karîm)" (23:116).

The Generous is the quality which forgives while having the power to exact retribution, which keeps promises and which exceeds the utmost one could desire when giving. The Generous is not concerned about the amount given nor the one to whom something is given. If others are in need, the Generous is not pleased. When the quality of generosity is displeased with a friend, the person reproaches the friend but does not carry this to the limit. The one who seeks refuge and shelter with someone who has the quality of generosity is not lost and is spared the need of begging. Those who gather to themselves all of these descriptions and do this in a most natural way is the absolute Generous and that is God alone. As an attribute of action, it means one endowed with liberality. As an attribute of power, it refers to one who fixes the measure of generosity and as an attribute of relation, all nobility stems from it.

43 Al-Raqîb: The Vigilant

"...Verily God is vigilant over you" (4:1).

The Vigilant is the quality which knows, observes, and watches out for a given object. It watches out for it so closely and constantly that those who manifest this quality are refrained from approaching the forbidden. Such a one is called vigilant. This word may be said to be derived from the Knower (al-`Alîm) and the Preserver (al-Hafîdh). Coupled with the consideration that it is close and constant in regard to avoiding that which is forbidden, we are protected from acquiring the forbidden.

44 Al-Mujîb: The Responder to Prayer

"...Verily my Lord is ever Near, Responder to Prayer" (11:61).

The Responder to Prayer responds with help to the request of those who ask, to the prayers of those who pray, and to the needs of the poor because of their poverty by giving what they need. In fact, the Responder to Prayer bestows God's gifts even before an appeal is made. There is no one like that except God. In fact, the Responder to Prayer knew the needs already in eternity and therefore planned the causes necessary to satisfy existing needs by creating food and nourishment and facilitating the causes and the instruments which made all of these requirements possible.

45 Al-Wâsi` : The Vast

"To God belongs the East and the West. Whichever way you turn, there is the Presence of God for God is Vast (wâsi`)." (2:115).

The Vast refers to expansiveness. Sometimes expansiveness is related to knowledge, as it is extensive and embraces a great number of things that are known. At other times it is related to charity and widespread blessings. But no matter how it is understood and to what it is applied, the absolute Vast is God. If one contemplates God's knowledge, one knows that the sea of God's knowledge has no shore. Rather the seas of His knowledge would be depleted if they were used as ink for His words. Furthermore, if one were to contemplate His beneficence and blessings, one would know that there is no end to what God can do. Every other expansiveness, even if it be great, ultimately reaches its limit. That which does not reach such a limit is more deserving of the name expansiveness. God is the absolute Vast, the quality which embraces and contains all things, which extends generosity to all things, knowledge to everything which is knowable, power to everything which may be determined by it, absolutely and without having to pay attention successively to things because every other expansiveness is restricted in comparison. Furthermore, any expansiveness ultimately reaches a limit so that it is not possible for one to conceive a further extension of it, whereas it is inconceivable that anything be added to that which is limitless and without boundary.

46 Al-Hakîm: The Wise

"They said: `Glory be to You. Of knowledge we have none except what You have taught us. In truth it is You Who are the Knower, the Wise'(al-Hakîm)" (2:32).

Being wise or having wisdom consists of knowledge of the highest of things gathered through the highest modes of knowing. The most sublime thing of all is that of God. There is no uncertainty in God's knowledge nor does it begin or end just as there is no uncertainty in God's commands. God is the true Wise because God knows the most

sublime things by means of the most sublime type of knowledge. Only the knowledge of God can be qualified in this manner. Those who follow God's commands will learn what they did not know from the reflection of this sign. Those who do not follow God's commands will not grow inwardly. None of God's deeds lack benefit and wisdom and none are for God because God is without need of anything. The goal of this quality is for human beings to know that there is an order in the universe and a continuity until the Day of Judgment. It is a synonym of the Knower (al-`Alîm), endowed with wisdom, that is, with knowledge of things as they come from God and with the production of actions according to what is expedient as well as being prudent in making decisions. This corresponds to the perfect soundness of God's providence in the guidance of the world and to the benefit of the accomplishment of God's decrees. The perfection of wisdom is possible only for God. God alone is the Wise.

47 Al-Wadûd: The Loving

"But ask forgiveness of your Lord and turn unto Him in repentance for my Lord is indeed full of mercy and love" (11:90).

The Loving is God's quality which desires good for all humanity. God does good for them and praises them. In return, God is the only one worthy of love. The Loving is that quality which loves the well-being of God's creatures. It procures it for them gratuitously. The Loving refers to the attribute from which proceeds the praise God bestows on the believer and the reward which God gives him. This Divine Quality approximates the concept underlying the Merciful. However, mercy is related to some one or some thing in need. The deeds of the Loving do not require that. Indeed, acts of kindness from the outset belong to the products of love. Just as the meaning of the Merciful is God's desiring good for the object of mercy and God being sufficient to bring it about while remaining above the empathy usually associated with mercy, likewise the Loving is God's desire to honor and bless humanity. God's actual mercy and His grace transcend the feeling of love. Love and mercy are intended for the benefit of those who receive them and not because of empathy on the part of the one giving. Therefore, the heart and soul of mercy and love are for the benefit of the other. That is the conception of these two characteristics in respect of God. Whereas human mercy and love stem from an empathy in the heart of the one giving, which actually has nothing to do with the one being given to, the Loving is a sign of unconditional love.

48 Al-Majîd: The Glorious

God the Glorious is seen in that which is noble in its essence, beautiful in its acts, and generous in its gifts. Even as nobility of essence when joined to goodness in deeds is `glory' so that God is called the Glorious as well as the Noble (al-Mâjîd) yet the latter is a more intense form of the verb. The Glorious appears to combine the meaning of the names the Majestic (al-Jalîl), the Bestower (al-Wahhâb), and the Generous (al-Karîm).

49 Al-Bâ`ith: The Resurrector

"...raising up those in the grave..." (22:7)

The Resurrector is God's quality of "raising up those in the grave," (22:7) and "revealing what is in people's hearts" (100:10). The raising of the dead can be called the final

`creation'. It is a time when God will raise human beings from their graves and bring forward all the actions, thoughts, and feelings that they encountered in their lifetime. Human beings will die the way that they lived. They will be resurrected the way that they die. Whatever they plant here, they will reap in the hereafter.

Knowledge of the Resurrector is difficult to attain. The majority of people know about it only in terms of general suppositions and obscure imaginings. The farthest their minds can go in this respect is their imagining that death is equivalent to nothingness. They consider the resurrection to be another `bringing into existence' initiated after a period of nothingness, as was the case with the first creation. But they are mistaken in this view. They are also mistaken in thinking that the second act of bringing into existence will be like the first one.

As for their thinking that death is nothingness, this is groundless. The grave is either one of the pits of the fires of hell or a garden from one of the gardens of paradise. As for the dead, they are either happy and not dead because "think not of those who are slain in the way of God as dead. Nay, they are living. With their Lord they have provision. Jubilant (are they) because of that which God has bestowed upon them of His bounty," (3:169)--or they are alive and wretched. It was for this reason that the Messenger of God called out to the enemy who had died in the battle of Badr, saying, "Certainly I have found the victory which my Lord has promised me to be true. Have you also found the punishment which your Lord has promised you to be true?" And when someone asked him, "But how do you call people who have died?" he answered, "They hear me as clearly as you do. The difference is that they are unable to answer."

Inner vision has shown the masters of insight that human beings have been created for eternity and that there is no question of there not being an eternal eternal afterlife. True, freedom of action may at one time be cut off from the body, and then one says, "He has died," at another time it may be returned to the body and then one says, "He lives and is resurrected," that is to say, his body has been brought back to life.

As for their thinking that the resurrection is a second creation which is just like the first creation, this is also not correct. Rather the resurrection is another creation not at all related to the first creation. For human beings there are numerous creations and not only two. God said, "We are able to substitute others like unto you in your stead and to produce you again in the condition or form which you knew not" (56:61). God also said, after the creation of the little lump of flesh and the clot of blood, "then We produced it as another creation so blessed be God, the Best of Creators" (23:14). Thus sperm is formed from earth. The lump of flesh is formed from the sperm. The clot of blood is formed from the lump of flesh. The spirit is formed from the clot of blood. Because of the greatness and majesty of the formation of the spirit and because it is something divine, God said, "Then We produced it as another creation so blessed be God, the Best of Creators" (23:14). He also said, "They will ask thee concerning the Spirit, Say: `The Spirit is by command of my Lord'" (17:85.). Then God created sensory perceptions after having created the source of the spirit--another creation. Next, God created discernment which becomes apparent after the age of seven--another creation. Then God created the ability to reason after the age of fifteen years or so--another creation. Every creation is a stage.

"He created you by (diverse) stages)" (71:14). The appearance of the characteristics of saintliness in such as have this characteristic bestowed upon them--that is another creation. The appearance of the characteristics of prophethood after that--this is another creation and a type of resurrection. God is the One Who raises up the Messengers even as God is the One Who raises up on the Day of Resurrection.

Just as it is difficult for an infant to understand the real nature of discernment before attaining discernment, so also, it is difficult for one possessing discernment to understand the real nature of reason before attaining the stage of being able to reason. And, in the same way, understanding the level of sanctity and prophethood is difficult for those who have attained the stage of being able to reason. The `new creations' or stages proceed one from the other. First comes the creation of the senses, then the creation of discernment followed by the creation of reason and culminating in the creation of sanctity and prophethood. It is common to human nature for people to deny what they have not yet attained rather than to believe that there is something that is hidden to them. With this in mind, it is natural for them to deny the creation of sanctity and prophethood. In the same way, it is natural for them to deny the second creation and the hereafter because they have not yet attained it.

Those who believe in any of the things that they themselves have not attained certainly believe in the unseen. That belief is the key to all happiness. Creation consists of stages of the One Essence. It is the ladder by which one climbs up the steps of the grades of perfection until one approaches the Presence which is the ultimate height of all perfection. One is then with God, suspended between rejection and acceptance, separation and admission. If one is accepted, one ascends to the highest of the high. If one is rejected, one falls to the lowest of the low. By this we mean that the only comparison that exists between the two--creation and resurrection--lies in the name creation itself. He who does not know what creation and resurrection are does not know the meaning of God the Resurrector.

50 Al-Shahîd: The Witness

The meaning of God's quality `the Witness' goes back to the Knower (al-`Alîm) together with a particular application. God is the "Knower of the invisible and the visible" (6:73). The invisible consists of that which is hidden and the visible consists of that which is manifest. God is the One who witnesses all things. If one refers to knowledge in an absolute sense, then one is referring to the Knower (al-`Alîm). If one refers to knowledge of the invisible and hidden things, then one is referring to the Aware (al-Khabîr). If one refers to knowledge to the things that are manifest, then one is referring to the Witness (al-Shâhid). Along with this, one must consider the fact that God will bear witness concerning humanity at the time of the resurrection on the basis of which God knows and has born witness to them.

51 Al-Haqq: The Truth

"...God is the Truth (al-Haqq)..." (22:6).

The Truth is God's quality, the essence of which is valid in itself and the cause for the existence of everything else. Everything except God is temporal as its existence is from other than itself. The Truth is existent by itself and not influenced by any other. It is in

this sense that it is unchanging. The quality meets the requirements of wisdom, justice, right or rightness, truth, reality, or fact. The word `haqq', truth or real, is used in reference to other things, but everything else changes in relationship to something else. When that truth disappears, it is no longer valid to refer to it as truth. This is not the case with the Truth. It does not change, has no beginning or end, does not disappear nor reappear.

52 Al-Wakîl: The Trustee

"...for us God suffices and He is the best Trustee (al-Wakîl)" (3:173).

The Trustee is the quality to which things have been entrusted. There are two kinds of trustees: one to whom some things are entrusted and one to whom everything is entrusted. The first is deficient and the second pertains to God alone. Those who are entrusted with things are classified, as those who are worthy, not by virtue of themselves, but by virtue of their appointment as an agent and their delegation to that position. Such a person is deficient in view of the fact that they have to be appointed or delegated. Secondly, those who by virtue of their essence are worthy of having all matters entrusted to them and having all hearts place reliance upon them, not by virtue of an appointment and a delegation coming from one other than them. This is the absolute Trustee. A trustee may be either those who carry out perfectly and without any shortcomings that which is entrusted to them or those who do not carry out everything perfectly. The absolute Trustee is God's quality to which matters are entrusted, which is conscientious in dealing with them, and which is faithful in carrying them out. That one is God alone.

53 Al-Qawî: The Strong

54 al-Matîn: The Firm

"...for your Lord--He is the Strong (al-Qawî) and able to enforce His Will" (11:66) .
"For God is He Who gives all sustenance--Lord of Power--the Firm (al-Matîn) "
(51:58).

Strength shows perfect power. Inasmuch as God has the utmost of power and is perfect therein, God is the Strong. God is able to overcome all opposition because of the perfection of power. God's strength is unconditional. With the same ease God can create millions of galaxies or millions of bees. With the quality of strength, God continues the creation, protects the creatures, and guides their actions. Firmness shows an intensity of strength. Inasmuch as God has intense power, God is the Firm to the highest degree. The Firm refers to the all-encompassing action of God's strength. Nothing can be saved from this strength nor can anything oppose it whether God's power be compassion for God's servants or vengeance and anger against God's enemies.

55 Al-Walî: The Friend

"...and besides him you have neither friend (walî) nor helper" (2:107).

The Friend is the divine quality of helping others. The meaning of God's help is obvious, for God subdues the enemies of the faith and helps His friends. God says,

"God is the friend of those who believe," (2:257) and also, "That is because God is the friend of those who believe, and because the disbelievers have no friend," (47:11) that is to say, they have no helper. Another verse refers to this, as well, "God hath decreed: Lo! I verily shall conquer, I and My messengers" (58:21).

56 Al-Hamîd: The Praised

"To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth for surely God--He is free of all wants, the Praised (al-Hamîd)" (22:64).

God is the Praised by virtue of God's praising Himself from all eternity and by virtue of human beings' praising God to all eternity. This fact of God being praised stems from God's qualities of majesty, exaltation, and perfection in relation to or from the point of view of those who make mention of God. The essence of praise is in remembering and reciting the qualities of perfection inasmuch as God is perfection.

57 Al-Muhsî: The Appraiser

"...and appraises everything..." (58:6).

The Appraiser is the divine quality of analyzing, counting, and recording quantities. The Appraiser comprehends and knows comprehensively all numbered things (al-`Alîm) and has power over them (al-Qâdir). The absolute quality of the Appraiser is that by which the quantity and dimensions of everything is known. Although it is possible for human beings to reckon some objects by virtue of their knowledge, yet they are incapable of reckoning the majority of them. God, however, records each deed even if it be the size of a mustard seed and the person will be held responsible on the Day of Judgment for it or rewarded for it. The possibility of human beings actualizing aspects of the Appraiser is weak, as is the case in regard to principles of knowledge.

58. Al-Mubdi': The Beginner

59. Al-Mu`îd: The Restorer

"Verily He it is Who ocreates everything from the beginning and causes it to return" (85:13).

The meaning of God's qualities of the Beginner, the Restorer is to bring another into being. When this bringing into being has no precedent in terms of an act similar to it, it is called a beginning. If there is a precedent in terms of an act similar to it, it is called a restoration (mu`îd). God began the creation of people. God is also the one who restores them. All things first originated from God and are restored to God.

60 Al-Muhyî The Life-Giver

61 al-Mumît: The Slayer

"How can you disbelieve in God for you were lifeless in your mother's womb. He brought you to life. He caused you to die and again He will restore you to life. Then unto Him only will you be returned" (2:28).

These qualities are also derived from the original act of bringing into being. When the object is life, bringing it into being is called life-giver. When it is death, its bringing into being is called slaying. No one creates death and life except God. There is no Life-Giver or Slayer except God.

62 Al-Hayy: The Living

"God! There is no god but He--the Living (al-Hayy), the Self-Existing, Eternal..." (2:255).

The Living is God's quality which perceives and is motivated to action. That which is devoid of action and perception altogether is said to be dead. The lowest level of perception is when the perceiver becomes conscious of self. That which is not conscious of self is inanimate and dead. The perfect and absolute Living is that under which the perception of all perceived things are arranged and all existing things fall under it so that no perceived thing strays away from God's knowledge and no motivation, impulse or action strays away from God's action. All of that is descriptive of God. God is the absolute Living.

As for every living being except the Living, its life is commensurate with its perception and motivation, impulse or action, and all of that is restricted to narrow limits. Moreover, there are gradations of living beings. Their ranks are commensurate with their gradation in perception and motivation to action, even as we have indicated before in respect of the ranks of the angels, human beings and animals.

63 al-Qayyûm: The Self-Existing

"God! There is no god but He--the Living, the Self-Existing, the Eternal..." (2:255).

God is the Self-Existing in that He requires nothing to exist. As an example, human beings exist or are alive because of the self within the body. The `self' governs the body and without the `self', the body does not see, hear, feel, taste, or move and finally dies. The body and every cell and atom contained within it are in need of the self to survive. This need is unending throughout one's lifetime. If the `self' were to disappear even for a moment, the body would die. The `self', on the other hand, is dependent upon the Self-Existing for existence as are all things in the universe. Without this Divine Grace in different degrees and strengths depending upon the need, nothing would exist.

64 Al-Wâjid: The Resourceful

The Resourceful is God's quality of lacking nothing. The quality is the very opposite of being in need. Those who lack what is necessary for being may not necessarily be called needy. Also those who possess what is essentially irrelevant to them and fail to contribute to their perfection would not be called resourceful. Rather, the Resourceful is the one who does not lack any of the things that are necessary. Everything necessary for the attributes of divinity and their perfection is present in the existence of God. From this standpoint, therefore, He is the Resourceful. In fact, God is the absolute Resourceful. But any other than God, even if he is resourceful in the sense that he has some of the attributes of perfection and their causes, yet still is in want and is not resourceful except relatively.

65 Al-Mâjid: The Noble

"...Lord of the Throne of the Noble (al-Mâjid)..." (85:15)

God's quality of nobility is an attribute of relation and action. It is God who shows infinite kindness towards His creatures. God has, for instance, given human beings the possibility of actualizing noble character traits and conduct. God then glorifies them for the noble character traits that they develop. Rewards are given to them and their sins are forgiven and hidden from others. Their rights are protected and their difficulties are solved. The means for their salvation are given to them. All of these are the means by which human beings become glorified in creation.

66 Al-Wâhid: The Unique

67 al-Ahad: The One

"He is the Unique (al-Wâhid)..." (13:16). "Say: He is God, the One (ahad).. " (112:1).

The One is God's quality which can neither be separated into component parts nor duplicated. An example of that which cannot be separated into component parts is a substance which is one in number. We say of that which is indivisible that it is one in the sense that it has no component parts. Similarly a geometric point has no component parts. God is one in the sense that it is impossible to conceive of division in respect of essence, attributes, actions, or justice. All the qualities of God are but Signs of that which is hidden within the One. The One reflects multiplicity in unity.

As for that which cannot be duplicated, it is that which has no peer like the sun, for example. For even though it is capable of division in imagination and though in its essence it is made up of component parts since it is one of the species of finite bodies, nevertheless, in fact, it is without a peer, though it is indeed possible for it to have a peer. If there is in existence an existent that is so unique in respect of its existence that it is entirely impossible to conceive of another sharing in its existence, then such an existent is the absolute Unique eternally and forever. The Unique reflects unity in multiplicity.

68 Al-Samad: The Eternal

"...God, the Eternal (al-Samad)..." (112:2)

God's quality of the Eternal is one to which we turn for our needs and our desires and the one which satisfies needs. God is the only recourse, support, and response to our needs and pain. The Eternal meets the needs of all creatures in accordance with the need that they have. Ever-present, knowing their needs before we ourselves know them, the Eternal satisfies our needs in the way they should be satisfied. This may not be the way that we want our needs to be satisfied but we should know that God is the absolute Eternal and, therefore, we should be thankful for however God meets our needs. Even if we were not to ask God to meet our needs, the Eternal would satisfy our needs. As the Quran says, "They say: `Why is not a Sign sent down to him from his Lord?' Say: `God certainly has the power to send down a sign but most of them understand not'" (6:37).

However, God has said that He loves His servants who respond to His commands with joy and pleasure and who are thankful to God.

69 Al-Qâdir: The Able

70 al-Muqtadir: The Powerful

"See they not that God Who created the heavens and the earth is able to create the like of them anew?" (17:99). "It is only God Who is powerful" (18:45).

The meaning of these two qualities is "to possesses power" but the Powerful has this to a greater extent than the Able. Power refers to the principle by means of which a thing comes into being according to a pre-determined plan of will and knowledge and in agreement with them. The Able has ability which is infinite. It is God's Will alone which causes things to happen. The universe God creates reflects God's power. It is created by God when God says "'Be!' and it is." The Able is the quality by which God does what God Wills to do and if God so Wills, He does not do it. It is not a part of the condition that one should inevitably will to do something and then exercise His power. Thus God is able to cause the resurrection now because God would effect it if God wished to do so. But if God does not effect it, it is because God does not wish it. God does not wish it because of the knowledge of the fixing of its appointed time and span but this does not detract from God's power to do so. The absolute able is the quality which creates every existent by Himself, independent of the assistance of another.

Through the Sign the Powerful, God not only creates all power but has total control over it, as well. Through this control, God is able to create what He wills and control it. Everything is in need of this power. If God Wills, God can strengthen the weak and if God Wills, God can weaken the strong. God's will strengthens those who follow His commands by giving them wisdom, patience, and perseverance and weakens those who follow their own ego by increasing their ambition, forgetfulness, self-confidence, and seeking of pleasures. In defense of God's servants, God discloses Himself through the Able, the Powerful.

71 Al-Muqaddim: The Promoter

72 al-Mu'akhkhir: Postponer

"...I (God) had already in advance sent you warning..." (50:28). "If We delay the penalty..." (11:8).

The Promoter, Postponer causes some to be drawn near to God and others to be distant from God. Those whom God has caused to be near, God has advanced and those whom God has caused to be distant, God has removed. God has advanced His Prophets and His friends by drawing them near to Him and guiding them. God has caused His enemies to be distant by separating them from Himself and by placing a veil between Himself and them.

What is intended by God is both advancement and retardation in respect of rank. There is in these qualities an indication that the one who takes the place of precedence does not do so by virtue of his knowledge and work; rather does he reach this position

through God sending him forward. The same is true of the one who is put back. This is made clear by the saying of God, "Lo, those unto whom kindness has gone forth before from Us, they will be far removed from thence," (21:101) and His saying, "And if We had so willed, We would have given every soul its guidance, but the word from Me concerning evil doers took effect: that I will fill hell" (32:13).

73 Al-Awwal: The First

74 al-Âkhir: Last

"He is the First (al-Awwal) and the Last (al-Âkhir)..." (57:3).

We should know that that which is first is first in relation to something and that which is last is last in relation to something. These two are opposites. It is inconceivable that one thing can be both first and last in the same respect and in relation to the same thing. Rather when we observe the order of existence as such and observe the chain of the ordered existents, then we must know that God is first in relation to them since each and every existent acquires its existence from God.

As for God, God exists by means of His own essence and has not derived His existence from another. At the same time, no matter how much we consider the order or progression and observe the gradations in standing of those who are moving towards God, we must conclude that God is the Last. For God is the ultimate to which the grades of the "knowing ones," mystics, ascend. Every knowledge that is attained before the knowledge of God is a step towards the knowledge of God. The ultimate knowledge is the knowledge of God. God is last in relation to the progression mentioned above and first in relation to existence. From God is the beginning, first of all, and to God is the return and result, last of all.

75 Al-Dhâhir: The Manifest

76 al-Bâtin: The Hidden

"...the Manifest (al-Dhâhir) and the Hidden (al-Bâtin) and He has full knowledge of all things" (57:3).

The Manifest, the Hidden are two divine qualities among those that are relative. A thing is manifest to some and hidden from others depending upon their ability to see and to realize. For those who seek God by means of their senses or imagination, God is the Hidden. Those who seek to know God through inference with their powers of reason find the Manifest. Someone may question this and say, "As for God being hidden in relation to the perception of the senses, that is quite obvious; but as for God being manifest in relation to that which is perceived by reason, that is difficult to accept." The term manifest is used for things about which there is no dispute, things in the perception of which people do not differ. But being 'manifest' to reason is a point on which people have had great doubt. How, then, is it possible for God to be manifested through reason?

At the same time, however, you must realize that God is hidden in His manifestness because of the degree of the intensity of God's manifestation. In other words, God's very

intensity of manifestation is the cause of God's hiddenness. God's very light is the veil of God's light, for everything which goes beyond its own limits must eventually turn to its opposite. Praise be to the One who is concealed from humanity by His light, the One who is hidden from them by the degree of His manifestness! God the Manifest, known by decisive proof which manifestly dominates all things. God is the Hidden, veiled by the senses, who knows hidden things.

77 Al-Wâlî: The Governor

"What! Have they taken for (objects of worship) governors (of creation) besides Him? But it is God--He is the Governor (al-Wâlî)" (42:9).

The Governor is the quality of planning the affairs of creation and assuming control over them. That is to say, the Governor takes charge of them and is capable of discharging the trust. The word suggests planning, power, and action. If all three aspects are not included, the quality of governorship is not there. There is no Governor except God. First of all, God is the only planner of creation. Secondly, God is responsible for and empowered with the ability to carry out the planning by actually bringing into creation everything that was planned. Thirdly, God is in charge of creation by perpetual and continuous actions of all the things that were planned and effected.

The whole of creation is under the governorship of God from before its creation to its end. God only says, "'Be' and it is (created)." Everything that is created is organized, grows and develops and then dies and disappears. At the time of the resurrection, all human beings will be brought back to life.

78 Al-Muta`âlî: The Exalted

"...God is the Great, the Exalted (al-Muta`âlî)" (13:9).

The Exalted has the meaning of the Highest (al-`Alî) but in an intensified form. Whereas everything upon the earth evolves from health to illness, from youth to old age, from being beautiful today and handicapped tomorrow, God is free of all of these defects and above any defect. The true meaning of the Exalted is too great to be understood by one's imagination.

79 Al-Barr: The Source of All Goodness

"Truly we did call unto Him from of old. Truly it is He, the Source of All Goodness (al-Barr) " (52:28).

The Source of All Goodness is the quality which is merciful. The absolute Source of All Goodness is God's quality from which comes every good deed and every mercy. God loves only good (barr) for His servants. God does not want to see them suffer yet God forgives those who cause others to suffer. If God chooses to punish, the punishment never goes beyond the deed committed while God's rewards are ten times greater for a good deed than the deed itself. The Source of All Goodness delays punishment so that the one in error may change his ways. Wrongdoings repented for are turned into good deeds. Good intentions are rewarded even if one is unable to carry them out.

80 Al-Tawwâb: The Acceptor of Repentance

"Then Adam learned words of inspiration from his Lord and his Lord turned towards him for He is the Acceptor of Repentance (al-Tawwâb)" (2:37).

The Acceptor of Repentance continues to accept repentance from God's creatures time and time again. It shows them God's warnings with the intent that--having been made aware of the dangers of their sins--they might be filled with fear of God and subsequently turn to God in repentance. Through God's accepting the evidence of their repentance, the favor of God once again reverts to them.

81 Al-Muntaqim: The Avenger

"And who does more wrong than one to whom are recited the Signs of his Lord and who then turn away therefrom? Verily from those who transgress We shall exact due retribution" (32:22).

The Avenger is God's quality which breaks the back of the arrogant, punishes criminals, and intensifies the punishment of tyrants. God does that after having excused them, forgiven earlier sins, given them many warnings, made repentance possible, and granted them time to reconsider and a brief respite. This is stronger vengeance than the quick infliction of a penalty, for if the penalty is hastened one does not sink deeper into disobedience and one does not incur extremely severe punishment.

82 Al-`Afû: The Pardonner

"...God is One that blots out wrongdoings and pardons." (22:60)

Al-`Afû is God's quality which erases sins and disregards acts of disobedience and is the opposite of the Avenger. This concept approximates the sense of the Forgiver, though the former is more far-reaching than the latter. For the Concealer of Faults indicates an overlooking of sin whereas the Pardonner indicates an erasing. The erasing of sin is more far-reaching than the simple concealing of it.

83 Al-Ra'ûf: The Clement

"And God is full of clemency (ra'ûf) to His devotees" (2:207).

The Clement is God's quality of having pity on others. Pity is the intensification of mercy. Therefore it has the same meaning as the Compassionate though in an intensified form.

84 Mâlik al-Mulk: The King of Absolute Sovereignty

"Say: `Oh God! King of Absolute Sovereignty (Mâlik al-Mulk), You give power to whom You please and You strip off power from whom You please; You endow with honor whom You please and You bring low whom You please. In Your hand is all good. Verily over all things You have power'" (3:26).

The King of Absolute Sovereignty is the quality of carrying out what God wills in God's kingdom in the manner God Wills, bringing into being, destroying, perpetuating, and annihilating as God pleases. The word al-Mulk here means 'kingdom', and the word al-Malik means 'the powerful one', 'the one who possesses perfect power'. The totality of everything in existence forms a single kingdom. God rules and has power over it. The totality of existing things are a single kingdom because they are dependent upon each other. Even if they are numerous in one respect, they still remain a unit in another. An example of this is the human body. Certainly it is a kingdom for the real nature of human beings. It consists of different members, but they all give the appearance of cooperating in attaining the goal of a single manager and thus the kingdom is one.

85 Dhû 'l-Jalâl wa 'l-Ikrâm: The Lord of Majesty and Generosity

"But will abide forever the Presence of thy Lord, full of Majesty and Generosity (Dhû 'l-Jalâl wa 'l-Ikrâm)" (55:27).

The quality Majesty and Generosity is such that there is no majesty and perfection which does not pertain to God and no honor nor honorable quality (makrama) which does not emanate from God. Everything perishes save His Presence which expresses the idea of Personality, Glory, Majesty, Essence, Self. The word 'Presence' (wajh) implies countenance or favor. "Whoever submits his whole self (wajh) to God and is a doer of good--he will get his reward with his Lord; on such shall be no fear nor shall they grieve" (2:112). Majesty pertains to God in respect of His essence, and honor overflows from God upon God's people. The variety of the ways in which God honors His people is almost unlimited and unending. The saying of God is indicative of this, "Verily We have honored the Children of Adam" (17:70).

86 Al-Muqsit: The Equitable

"There is no god but He. That is the witness of God, His angels and those endowed with knowledge, equitable" (3:18).

The Equitable is God's quality which acts and distributes justice to those who have been wronged from those who are doing wrong. Its perfection lies in linking not only the satisfaction of the one wronged but also the satisfaction of the one who did wrong. That is the ultimate of justice and equity. This is not possible for anyone except God.

87 Al-Jâmi` : The Gatherer

"Our Lord! It is You Who gathers humanity together to a Day of which there is no doubt for God never fails in His promise" (3:9).

The Gatherer is the quality which joins things that are similar, things that are dissimilar, and things that are opposed to each other. As for God bringing together similar things, one finds an example of this in God's bringing together many creatures who are a part of the human race on this earth and gathering them in the realm at the time of the resurrection. As for God's bringing together dissimilar things, one finds an example of this in God's bringing together the heavens, the stars, the air, the earth, the seas, the animals, the plants, and the different minerals, all of which have different shapes, colors, tastes and characteristics. God has brought animals, plants, and minerals together

on earth. God has brought everything together in the universe, including the earth, the heavens, and air. Another example of this is God's bringing together bones, nerves, veins, muscles, brains, skin, blood and the rest of the component parts to be found in the body of an animal. Each individual cell of each part moves, seeks, finds, rejects, grows, divides, and dies. As for God bringing together things opposed to each other, one finds an example of this in God's bringing together heat and cold, moisture and dryness in the physical constitution of the animals, those things that are mutually repellent and hostile one to another. This latter phenomenon is the most comprehensive aspect of God's ability to bring things together. In reality, one does not know all the details of God's ability to bring things together unless one knows every instance in which God has ever brought things together both in this life and in that which is to come.

88 Al-Ghanî: The Rich

89 al-Mughnî: The Enricher

"God is the Rich (al-Ghanî) and you are needy" (47:38). "...Soon will God enrich you" (9:28).

The Rich, Enricher are qualities which show God is not dependent upon anything in regard to essence or qualities. Rather God is exalted above any connection with others. Those whose essence or the attributes of his essence are connected with something external to their essence in such a way that their existence or their perfection is dependent upon another, is poor. That is to say, poor in the sense of being dependent for satisfying basic needs. Only God has complete independence. God is also the One Who satisfies the needs of others.

God is also the Enricher. It is inconceivable that those who are made free of want should become rich in the absolute sense for at the very least they remain in need of the One Who enriched them. Therefore they are not truly rich. Rather it is true that they can dispense with everyone but God in view of the fact that God supplies them with what they need and not in view of the fact that their basic needs are no longer there.

90 Al-Mâni` : The Protector

The Protector is God's quality which repels those things which cause destruction and deficiency in one's life--religious and otherwise-- by creating causes which are intended to preserve them (al-Hafîdh). Whereas the Protector stresses the idea of prohibiting and suppressing obstacles, the Preserver (al-Hafîdh) stresses the idea of guarding and protecting. All preservation necessarily implies an attraction and a repelling. The one who understands the meaning of the Preserver also understands the meaning of the Protector. Protection (mâni`) refers to destructive causes and preserving (hifdh) refers to being preserved from destruction. Preserving is the aim of the protecting. Since all protecting is intended for the sake of preserving whereas preserving is not sought for the sake of protecting, it follows that every preserver is a protector, whereas every protector is not a preserver unless the one who protects does so in an absolute manner. In this case, the causes of destruction and deficiency are such that preservation follows of necessity.

91 Al-Dârr: The Punisher

92 al-Nâfi` : The Creator of the Beneficial

These qualities of God, used especially in invocations and incantations, from which emanate that which is harmful and that which is beneficial. Neither quality appears in the Quran but belong among God's most beautiful qualities according to a Tradition (hadith) from the Messenger. Harm and benefit are qualities of God which come either through the mediation of the angels, human beings, or inanimate bodies, or without any mediation. Do not think that poison kills and harms by itself, or that food satisfies or is beneficial by itself, or that an angel, a human being, a devil or any created thing, such as sky or star or something else, is itself capable of producing a benefit or a harm or something beneficial or harmful. Rather is it true that each one of these is only a subservient cause from which nothing comes forth except that for which it has been made subservient.

93 Al-Nûr: The Light

"God is the Light (nûr) of the heavens and the earth..." (24:35).

The Light is God's quality of being the visible by means of which everything is made visible. That which itself is visible and makes other things visible is called 'light'. When existence is contrasted with non-existence, it becomes obvious that visibility pertains to existence and that there is no darkness darker than non-existence. That which is free of the darkness of non-existence and even from the possibility of non-existence and brings everything from the darkness of nonexistence to the visibility of existence is worthy of being called the Light. Existence is a light which flows freely upon all things from the light of God's essence. Therefore God "is the light of the heavens and the earth" (24:35). Just as there is not a particle of the light of the sun which does not point to the existence of the illuminating sun, so also there is not a particle of all the things that exist in the heavens and the earth and that which is between them which does not by the mere possibility of its existence point to the necessary existence of its creator.

94 Al-Hâdî: The Guide

"God is sufficient for a Guide and Helper" (25:31).

The Guide is God's quality of being, first of all, the guide of God's servants to knowledge (ma`rifah) of God's Essence in order that they bear witness with this knowledge. Secondly, the Guide guides the common people among God's servants to the things that God has created in order that they might be able to use them as their witness. Finally, God guides every creature to that which is indispensable for the satisfaction of its needs. God guides the infant to nursing at his mother's breast from the time of his birth, guides the young bird to pick up seeds from the time of its hatching, guides the bee to building its house in hexagonal form since this is the most appropriate form for the bee's body--that form which is the most cohesive and the least likely to be affected by deep gashes. This subject, which is lengthy, is best defined in the saying of God, "He (is the One) who gave unto everything its nature, then guided it aright," (20:50) and in His words, "(He is the One) who measures, then guides" (87:3). Whoever God has guided, none can lead astray. Whoever God has lead astray, none can lead to the Straight Path. However, God creates all creatures with the ability to be guided on the

Straight Path, in submission to the will of the One God. It is the misuse of their free-will and ego, strengthened by satanic suggestions, that causes God to lead them astray.

95 Al-Badî` : The Originator

"Originator (badî`) of the heavens and the earth! When He decrees a thing, He only says to it, `Be!' and it is" (2:117).

The Originator is God's quality to which nothing is similar. The absolute Originator is original in the sense that nothing known is similar to God neither in terms of essence nor attributes nor actions. If something similar exists, is it not absolutely original, unequalled, incomparable. No one is worthy of this name in an absolute sense except God. There was nothing before Him so that one like Him could not have been known before Him. Every existing thing which has come into being results from God's originating it and it is in no way analogous to its originator.

96 Al-Bâqî: The Everlasting

"The Everlasting of the heavens and the earth ..." (6:101).

The Everlasting is God's quality the existence of which is necessary in itself. When human minds think of God in terms of the future, God is called the the Everlasting and when it thinks of God in terms of the past, God is called the Eternal. The existence of the absolute Everlasting cannot be conceived of as coming to an end in the future. This is expressed by the term forever (abadî) while the absolutely Eternal One is the One Whose existence in the past cannot be extended back to a beginning. This is expressed by the term eternal (adhalî). The phrase "necessarily existent by means of its essence" implies all of that. However, these qualities (that is, bâqî) and qadîm) are applicable only in the sense that the human mind relates existence to the past or the future. In reality, only changeable things pertain to the past or the future. These are two expressions of time. Nothing pertains to time except change and motion or movement, for movement in itself divided into past and future and changeable things come within the scope of time by means of change (that is, motion). Therefore, that which is above change and movement is not included in time and subsequently has no past or future. In this sense, the past is the same as the future; passing is the same as enduring.

We have a past and a future only when certain events have occurred to us or in us and when new events will occur. There must be certain events happening one after another in order that they might be divided into a past that has ceased to exist and is concluded, into a present time and into that of which the renewal is anticipated afterwards. When there is no renewal and no termination there can be no time. And why should it not be so since God existed before time? God created time, but this did not change a thing pertaining to God's essence. After God created time, God remained as before. Traditionally, grave stones are inscribed beginning with the phrase "huwa'l-Bâqî," "He is the Everlasting."

97 Al-Wârith: The Inheritor

"...and We are the Inheritors" (15:23).

The Inheritor is the quality to which possessions return after the passing away of the temporary owner. The Inheritor is God, because God remains after His creatures pass away. Everything returns and reverts to God. At that time God asks, "Who takes possession today?" And God answers, "That belongs to God, the One, the All-Powerful" (40:16). This is in reference to the opinion of the majority of the people who consider that they themselves are owners. But on the Day of Judgment, the real nature of the situation will be revealed to them. This call (i.e., "Who takes possession today?") expresses the real nature of that which will be revealed to them at that time.

98 Al-Rashîd: The Right in Guidance

"Surely you are an example of a forebearer (al-halîm), the Right in Guidance (al-Rashîd)" (11:87).

The Right in Guidance is God's quality of leading one's disposition to its ultimate aim as a result of right ways-of-behaving without the advice of a counselor, the directions of a director, or the guidance of a guide. This one is God alone. God is the best of teachers, leading creatures towards the Straight Path and salvation. God never fails in wisdom or actions. Everything God does has a beneficial and clear purpose. The effectiveness of God as the Right in Guidance is such that everything is guided by God's Will.

99 Al-Sabur: The Patient

"And obey God and His Messenger and dispute not one with another lest you lose your courage and your strength depart from you. Be patient and persevering. Surely God is with those who patiently persevere" (8:46).

The Patient is God's quality of not acting in haste or prematurely rushing into an action. God brings matters about in a determined measure and make them happen according to a definite plan. God does not delay them beyond their appointed time as a lazy person might do nor does God hasten them ahead of their appointed time. That is to say, God does not act impetuously in this respect as an impatient person might do. Rather does God bring about everything in its proper time, in the manner that is necessary that it be and just as it ought to be. God does all of that without being subjected to a motive force opposed to God's will. God never acts with haste and therefore God is most deserving of the name the Patient.

Fonte: Internet