

37 - Sources of information about Names and Attributes

QUESTION: What are the sources from which the Muslims take their knowledge of the Names and Attributes of Allah?

ANSWER: Muslims believe that Allah’s Names and Attributes are *tawqeefiyyah* – an Arabic word which we have come across before.

Put simply, this means that the Names and Attributes are taken only from the Quran and/or the Sunnah (the statements of Muhammad (peace be upon him)).

There is no role for the intellect and human mind in determining what Allah is like.

So Muslims accept what comes in the Quran and the Sunnah telling them about Allah, and they do not add anything to this, change anything from this or take anything away from this.

Hopefully this stands to reason. What role can there possibly be for our very limited intellects in deciding what the Creator of the Universe is like?

Islam very strongly opposes the idea of speaking without knowledge, i.e. according to personal opinions and tastes.

The Quran states:

And do not follow what you have no knowledge of. Indeed the hearing, the sight and the heart – each of these will be questioned (about what the person said).

Surah Al Israa (the 17th surah) aayah 36

One of the famous Islamic scholars of the earliest times, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal said:

'Allah may not be described except with what He has described His own Self with, or what His Messenger has described Him with. This cannot go beyond the Quran and the hadeeth.'

So the sources for information about Allah are the Quran and the authentic hadeeths (statements of Muhammad – peace be upon him).

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NEXT TIME: From where and how do Muslims derive the Attributes of Allah?