

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

ANSWER: We mentioned briefly in the last posting that Muslims derive all their information about Allah from two sources: the Quran and the Sunnah (authentic statements of Muhammad - peace be upon him). We mentioned that Islam prohibits intellect and logic from entering into this aspect of belief.

But a person may well ask:

'It is obvious to see where the Names of Allah, such as Ar Rahman, Ar Rafeeq, Al Lateef and others, occur in the Quraan and hadeeths. These Names are clearly stated at various locations in the Quran and the hadeeths and can be easily found.

But how about the attributes, such as Allah's Honour, Allah's Descending, Allah's Striking, etc – how can one avoid using his own intellect to know what is an Attribute and what is not an Attribute?"

The answer is: Attributes are established for Allah from the Quran and the Sunnah in one of three ways: ¹

- 1) The Attribute is clearly mentioned – such as when Allah in the Quran mentions His Strength, or His Face.
- 2) The Attribute is derived from one of His Names – such as the Attribute of Forgiveness which is derived from Allah's Name al Ghafoor (the Oft Forgiving)
- 3) The Attribute is directly understood from an Action or Description that occurs in the Quran or the Sunnah - such as the Attribute of Retribution for the acts of the Criminals – this Attribute can be derived from the following aayah:

¹ Refer to *al qawaa'id ul muthlaa* p68 of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen for more information

Indeed We will get retribution from the criminals.

Surah as Sajdah (the 32nd chapter) ayah 22

So it can be seen that there is a specified method which the scholars right from the earliest times have used when teaching about Allah's Names and Attributes.

This once again highlights the fact that Islam has a well developed fixed methodology for deriving the core Islamic beliefs; this is not an area where everyone and anyone can have their own say according to their own opinion.

Rather everyone's statement about Allah is rejected unless it comes with a specific proof from the Quran or from the authentic hadeeths.

This is something that we shall return to in a little more detail in a few postings' time.

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NEXT TIME:

What are the errors regarding Allah's Names and Attributes that people have fallen into?