

## 45 –Do the Attributes actually mean anything?

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**QUESTION:** Do these Attributes of Allah, like Hands, Face, Anger, etc actually mean anything or are they just figures of speech?

**ANSWER:** This is a question that is actually much more important than might be suggested at first glance.

In fact it goes to the heart about what Islam teaches about Allah.

The simple answer to the question is: yes, the Attributes such as Face, Anger etc do have a meaning and it is the meaning which is apparent - the Face of Allah literally means His Face.

So the 'wajh' (Face) of Allah is not just a word which people state on their tongues – or, as when it occurs in the Qur'an, a word which Muslims recite without it actually meaning anything.

And the same is true for all the other Attributes.

The Qur'an mentions:

**Indeed We have made it an Arabic Qur'an, so that you might understand its meanings and its warnings.**

*Surah az Zukhruf (the 43<sup>rd</sup> chapter) verse 3*

**And We have sent down upon you the Reminder (the Qur'an) so that you can clarify to the people what has been sent down to them so that they might reflect.**

*Surah an Nahl (the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter) verse 44*

So the Qur'an is in Arabic, in a form that people can reflect upon – and this would not be possible if the meanings of the Qur'an could not be understood. Otherwise there would be no significance in it being in Arabic or any other language. <sup>1</sup>

It is inconceivable that a Merciful Loving God would send down a Book, or that His Messenger (peace be upon him) would say things, by which the guidance of the people was intended, whilst what was being said to the people was without real meanings – some random concoction of letters thrown together without any meaning that the people could understand.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to *al qawaa'id ul muthlaa* p76 of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen for more information

So the Attributes of Allah which occur in the Qur'an and in the authentic hadeeths have a meaning – they are not just pretty words which are merely figures of speech.

But – and here is the important point – the exact nature of these Attributes is not known to us.

This, I hope, should be evident to us, based on what we have discussed in the emails so far.

So when we say 'the Face of Allah', we know that this literally means 'Face'. It does not mean the Nobility of Allah, or the Generosity of Allah, or any other meaning which people try to attach it.

And it does not mean nothing at all – rather it does have a meaning, the meaning which any Arabic speaker would understand from the word 'wajh' – i.e.the meaning of 'Face'.

And this is directly linked to the next topic we shall discuss – that of 'tafweed'.

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**NEXT TIME:** What is tafweed?