

## Concept and Levels of *Tasbīḥ* and *Tasbīḥ* of the Name in *Ḥadīths*: Focusing on the First Verse of Sūrah A'ālā

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### Abstract

The themes of *tasbīḥ* (glorification) and divine names are central to the *Musabbihāt* chapters (Qur'anic chapters beginning with glorification). Their thematic unity reveals a close interrelation. A significant portion of these verses involves God's glorification and His command for creation to glorify Him. This command appears in various forms: the imperative *sabbih*, glorification with praise (*fa-sabbih bi-ḥamdi...*), and twice as *fa-sabbih bi-ismi rabbika al-'azīm*. Crucially, the direct command *sabbih isma rabbika al-a'lā* (87:1) to glorify the Name occurs only once. *Tasbīḥ al-ism* is distinguished by three features: it has no temporal restriction (unlike pure *tasbīḥ* or *tasbīḥ* with praise), it is exclusive to the *musabbihāt*, and its verse content is unique. This suggests a special divine emphasis on this concept. According to tradition, *tasbīḥ* purifies the heart from all but God, and the inner reality (*bāṭin*) of the divine Name is the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Therefore, *tasbīḥ* of the Name signifies sincere acceptance of the guardianship (*wilāyah*) of the Almighty God and the Ahl al-Bayt (as), leading to heart purification and progress in divine knowledge (*ma'rifah*). This study elucidates these inner dimensions based on reliable *ḥadīths*.

**Keywords:** *Tasbīḥ*, Divine Names, Guardianship (*Wilāyah*), True Monotheism.

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## Introduction

The discourse on the cognition and exposition of the Divine Names and Attributes (*Asmā' wa Ṣifāt Allāh*) constitutes one of the common topics among theoretical mysticism (*'Irfān Nazarī*), philosophy, and Qur'anic sciences. Nevertheless, the manner in which each of these disciplines approaches the discussion of the Divine Names and Attributes differs from the others. Accordingly, the method and context of these sciences are also distinct. For instance, the primary objective of mysticism and philosophy in addressing these subjects is the negation of any kind of multiplicity or plurality within the Divine Essence. That is, the aim is to establish that the plurality and diversity of the Divine Names and Attributes must not, under any circumstance, entail multiplicity within the Divine Essence; otherwise, this would lead to an infinite regress and numerous theological and philosophical inconsistencies. In the Qur'anic sciences, however, the main focus is generally placed upon the sacred text itself and the conduct and tradition (*sunnah*) of the Infallibles (as), wherein humankind is commanded to worship the meaning of the Name, which is described as pure monotheism (*tawḥīd khāliṣ*), whereas the worship of the Names themselves is deemed disbelief (*kufr*), and the worship of both the Name and its meaning together is considered polytheism (*shirk*).

In the discussion of *tasbīḥ* (glorification), it often becomes necessary to examine its relationship with the Divine Names and Attributes. Questions arise such as: What does the glorification of the Name—commanded in the Qur'anic verses—truly signify? In acts of glorification, are specific Names or Attributes of God invoked? Is there a difference in which of God's Names one employs in *tasbīḥ* or *taḥmīd* (praise)? Questions such as these underscore the importance of examining the correlation between the Divine Names and Attributes and the glorification of God.

Since many human attributes—lexically, and according to some even semantically—resemble the Divine Names and Attributes,<sup>1</sup> *tasbīḥ* plays an important role in negating human misconceptions regarding the Divine Names and Attributes and their anthropomorphic interpretation. *Tasbīḥ*, while affirming the existence of Divine Names and Attributes, allows the human being to glorify God in a manner befitting His majesty, through the awareness of the limitations of one's cognitive faculties.

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1. This debate is one of the most extensive in philosophy, especially in understanding the language of religion. In these discussions, the verbal or spiritual commonality of human and divine names is discussed, and solutions are offered for the problem of speaking of God with the aforementioned names while paying attention to the similarity with human names. (For further reading, see: *Speaking of God*, Alizamani, 1387)



That is, although the *tawqīfī* (revealed and fixed) Names of God in the Qur'an are unquestionably authentic and free of doubt, human epistemic limitation prevents one from attaining full knowledge of the Divine Essence through His Names. Hence, we invoke God by the Names and Attributes that He Himself has chosen, while simultaneously exalting Him above all anthropomorphic association or resemblance to any creature. In exploring this topic, one may pursue various paths—through mysticism, philosophy, or even theology (*kalām*). Indeed, such discussions are abundant in the rational sciences. Yet, it seems to the present authors that the path to understanding the interrelationship between *asmā'* (Names) and *tasbīḥ* (glorification), and the correlation of these meanings, can also be attained through a study of the sacred narrations transmitted from the Infallibles (as). Searching for these profound meanings in this vast ocean of knowledge is indeed arduous—particularly when no defined boundary for investigation exists. Accordingly, the primary focus of the present study rests upon several noble narrations found in the most authentic Shi'a sources, accompanied by brief allusions, to the extent possible, to verse 1 of Sūrah A'lā and verse 110 of Sūrah Isrā' for elucidating the intended meaning. In order to present the subject more clearly, it is first necessary to pose several key questions:

How is the relationship between *tasbīḥ* and the Divine Names and Attributes expressed in the words of the Infallibles (as)?

According to the definitions derived from the sayings of the first Infallible, does *tasbīḥ* possess stages or degrees? If so, what are those stages?

What is the meaning of the glorification of the Name (*tasbīḥ al-ism*) according to the implications of the relevant narrations?

At the outset, the study will address the etymological and terminological meanings of the words *tasbīḥ*, *ism*, and *ṣifat*, followed by the presentation of the cited narrations and Qur'anic verses for analytical exposition of the topic.

## Lexical Study

### *Tasbīḥ*

The root of this term is s-b-ḥ (س.ب.ح). According to Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, the phrase *Subḥān Allāh* denotes the exaltation of God above all that is unworthy of Him (Farahidi 1409, vol. 3, p. 15). Ibn Fāris identifies two primary meanings for this root: first, a form of worship, and second, a form of exertion or striving. Based on these meanings, he also lists derived connotations such as amazement, swimming in water, a swift horse, the exaltation of God above all unworthy attributes, and the manifestation of divine majesty and grandeur (See: Ibn Faris, 1404, vol. 3, p. 12)



Rāghib Iṣfahānī likewise derives this root as denoting rapid motion through water or air; accordingly, he defines *tasbīḥ* as the exaltation of God, whose original sense implies swift movement toward the worship of God. Moreover, he classifies *tasbīḥ* as encompassing all forms of worship—be they behavioral, verbal, or intentional. The distinguishing feature of this meaning, as opposed to others, lies in the dual notions of motion and speed inherent in the act of glorification (Ragheb Isfahani, 1412, vol. 1, p. 3).

Muṣṭafawī, in addition to meanings such as the exaltation of God above the claims of deniers, remembrance and prayer, praise (*tahmīd*), astonishment, and divine grandeur, identifies two essential aspects in the root sense of *tasbīḥ*: movement along the path of truth and distance from even the slightest imperfection. He interprets the glorification of all creatures, as attested by the Qur’anic verses revealed on this matter, within this very framework. Moreover, he differentiates between *tasbīḥ* and related concepts such as *tanzīh*, *taqdīs*, *taḥhīr*, and *tazkiyah*, while acknowledging that they ultimately converge upon a single principle (See: Mostafavi, 1416, vol. 5, p. 2).

Based on the definitions provided, and in alignment with the Qur’anic verses and narrations addressing this subject, it may be concluded that *tasbīḥ* constitutes a path—a journey through which the human being attains degrees of gnosis, growth, and perfection. The attainment of such stages through other means would be more difficult and time-consuming. In other words, through *tasbīḥ* of God, the human traverses the path of divine unity (*tawḥīd*) toward God more swiftly and completely. As various definitions emphasize, *tasbīḥ* signifies the exaltation of God above all those deniers ascribe to Him. Another key point inferred from these meanings is that *tasbīḥ* is continuous and unceasing—encompassing all acts of worship performed by humankind throughout the day and night. Furthermore, numerous Qur’anic verses—such as the opening verses of Sūrahs Ḥadīd Ḥaṣhr, and Jumu’ah—indicate that this act is not exclusive to human beings; all creatures continuously and perpetually engage in the glorification of God. In other words, the glorification of God by His creation represents a harmonious and uninterrupted movement that distances them from nonexistence and draws them nearer to divine knowledge and unity.

Having thus outlined a concise definition of *tasbīḥ*, it is important to note—through reflection on the Qur’anic verses such as verse 1 of Sūrah A’lā and verses 74 and 96 of Sūrah Wāqī’ah—that this subject is intimately connected with the concept of the Name (*ism*) and the discussions related to it. Accordingly, whenever the glorification of God and the manner of its performance are considered, it becomes essential to analyze and define the



Divine Names and Attributes as well. Therefore, for a better approach to the current discussion, it is necessary first to define and explain the Divine Names and Attributes.

### ***Ism*** (Name)

According to Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, the root of *ism* derives from *al-samw* (السَّمْو), meaning elevation or height (Farahidi 1409, vol. 3, p. 15). Aḥmad ibn Fāris similarly states that the root letters *sīn–mīm–wāw* (س م و) denote loftiness. (Ibn Faris, 1404, vol. 3; p. 98). His analysis of the root (s-m-w) thus conveys the sense of height or elevation.

Rāghib defines *ism* as a word through which the essence (*dhāt*) of an object is known, and which brings to mind the referent (*musammā*), that is, the entity to which the name is ascribed (Ragheb Isfahani, 1412, p. 4). In reality, the name serves as a bridge connecting the individual to the referent; therefore, it must be capable of encompassing the essential characteristics of the referent in order to guide the mind toward it.

In describing material objects or matters, a name often conveys all the attributes of its referent. It is well known in Arabic that some entities—such as the camel or the cloud—may possess multiple names, each corresponding to certain attributes of the referent. Thus, to avoid misunderstanding and ensure proper identification, each aspect of the referent is designated by a specific name that reflects its particular qualities.

### **Anthropomorphism and Negation of Divine Attributes**

It is clear that the foundation for entering the discussion of God’s names and attributes lies in addressing the concepts of anthropomorphism (*tashbih*) and negation (*ta’til*). Accordingly, the knowledge that a person gains about their Creator must be fundamental and accurate, originating from the authentic and pure source of revelation (*wahy*). On this basis, humans do not fall into extremes and avoid being caught in the traps of negation and anthropomorphism. Many people, based on their innate need for understanding, have sought knowledge of God. However, as the poet Hafiz once wrote: When they did not see the truth, they invented a myth (Hafiz, Ghazal No. 184). Anthropomorphism is a perilous pitfall, where a monotheist may, in their attempt to understand God’s names and attributes, fall into this trap and thus be led astray. The denier and the atheist, likewise, fall into the pit of negation, wherein they reject any specific attributes of God.

In the words of Imam Riḍā (peace be upon him), people’s understanding of monotheism can be classified into three groups: some have turned to anthropomorphism, some have fallen into the pit of negation, and some have taken the correct path of affirming God without



anthropomorphism<sup>1</sup>. It becomes clear that there is a path to prove the existence of God and recognize His Oneness in a manner that neither negates His attributes nor compares Him to His creatures. Instead, this path leads to recognizing Him according to the attributes He Himself has revealed. In the words of *Imam Ṣādiq* (peace be upon him), the correct approach to understanding Tawhīd is the recognition of God's attributes as they are described in the Qur'an<sup>2</sup>. What has been discussed in the previous sections touches on what is known in philosophical literature, particularly in the context of contemporary theological debates, under the title of language of religion and the problem of speaking about God. The crux of this issue is that human language, with its particularities, is inadequate to express the divine reality. We know that God, in the Abrahamic traditions, has transcendent qualities that are beyond the grasp of human comprehension. Therefore, the method of speaking about God cannot be the same as speaking about human beings, as human language is incapable of fully encapsulating the divine meaning.

Nevertheless, the knowledge of God does not lead to negation or an abstract concept, but is rather achieved through reference to the divine speech (God's Word), which, to the extent of human capacity, enables one to attain true *Tawhīd* (Oneness) of God, which has infinite levels.

### **The Relationship Between the Names of God and the Names of His Creatures:**

There are certain similarities between some of the names of God and those of His creatures. This topic has attracted the attention of interpreters and scholars, raising the question of whether this similarity is linguistic or meaningful. Apparent contradictions exist between various interpretations and the narrations on this subject. For example, God's name as The All-Knowing refers to an absolute and perfect knowledge that the Creator possesses. If a person is granted a measure of knowledge, the similarity between this divine name and the human attribute of knowledge is meaningful and not linguistic, because this knowledge stems from God's eternal and infinite knowledge and is imparted to the heart of the individual.

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1. In the understanding of Tawhid, there are three schools: Negation, Anthropomorphism, and Affirmation without Anthropomorphism. The school of Negation is not permissible, and the school of anthropomorphism is also not permissible because God is beyond any resemblance. The correct path is Affirmation without Anthropomorphism (Al-Saduq, 1372, p. 107).

2. The correct school of *Tawhid* is that which is revealed in the Qur'an regarding the attributes of God. Hence, it rejects both falsehood and anthropomorphism, affirming that there is neither negation nor anthropomorphism; God is the eternal, existing One (Ibid).



According to Allama Tabatabai, the true ownership of the names and attributes (*al-Asmá al-Ḥusná*) belongs to God alone, and others only have the right to possess these names to the extent that God permits them. Even then, the ultimate ownership remains with God. He mentions one of the reasons for this shared meaning in the names of God and others is the names that are expressed in the form of the superlative degree, such as '*Ali* (The Most High) and others, which indicate that the one who is exalted and the one who is exalted upon in the highest sense share a common essence. Additionally, names that are expressed in the form of an attribution, such as *Khair al-Hakimin* (The Best of Judges), also imply the same meaning. The conclusion drawn from this is that the true essence and ultimate meaning of names that are shared between God and His creations are affirmed for God, and whatever names and attributes others possess are granted by His permission. (Tabatabai, 1390, Vol. 8, p. 358).

Philosophers, in the beginning, for the purpose of clarification, divide words and meanings into two categories. In the case of words that are shared between humans and God, one can speak in two ways: Linguistic sharing and Meaningful sharing. In the first case, the meanings differ for both, and only the words are shared. In the second case, the meaning is the same for both God and humans, though the words used for God may be considered literal and for humans metaphorical (Yousefian, 1399, pp. 206-207).

We do not intend in this short text to delve into the philosophers' views. However, briefly, it can be said that proponents of the meaningful sharing theory regard speaking of God in this manner as both possible and necessary. On the other hand, proponents of the linguistic sharing view have often fallen toward negation. The view known as negative theology, commonly attributed to Moses Maimonides, holds that we cannot use the same words and expressions for God that we use in our daily language for human beings. This view, which seems to have emerged from a fear of anthropomorphism, has itself fallen into the pit of negation.

Although many thinkers have considered the theory of linguistic sharing dangerous due to its denial and skepticism toward God and His attributes, we observe that most theorists in negative theology, including figures like Plotinus, Dionysius, Eckhart, and in Islam, thinkers such as Qadi Sa'id Qummi, Mulla Rajab Ali Tabrizi, and others, emphasize the reality of God's essence and the validity of religious and mystical experiences (Ali Zamani, 1387, p. 9). Moreover, philosophers have proposed various viewpoints regarding the possibility or impossibility of speaking about God, including symbolic theology, cosmological theology, theory of meaninglessness, and others.



From the narrational viewpoint, this subject (i.e., the relation between divine Names and attributes) has been presented as follows: that the *Asmā' Allāh* (Divine Names) are attributes pertaining only to their subjects, and that the attributes are distinct from the subjects to which they refer<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, according to ḥadīths, the Divine Essence (*dhāt Allāh*) is other than the Names by which He is invoked, and the Names themselves are other than He (the Divine Essence).<sup>2</sup>

The principle of otherness between attribute and subject (*qā'idat ghayriyyat al-ṣifah wa al-mawṣūf*) is among the theological principles dealing with divine attributes (*ṣifāt Allāh*). It provides a fundamental basis for resolving ontological and semantic issues concerning the nature and meaning of the divine attributes. Some Muslim thinkers regard the principle of otherness (*ghayriyyah*) as one of the core doctrines of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī — a prominent representative of negative theology (apophatic theology) (*al-ilāhiyyāt al-salbiyyah*) in Islam — states: Among the principles of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) is that the attribute is absolutely other than the subject, and that the attributes of God, the Exalted, return to the negation of deficiencies or the affirmation of perfections (Qāḍī Sa'īd al-Qummī, 1373, pp. 252–253). Negative theology (*al-ilāhiyyāt al-salbiyyah*) asserts that nothing may be said of God except in a negative mode — that is, we cannot say what God is, but only what He is not.<sup>3</sup>

**Historical Background:** The discussion on the relation between God's Names and the names of creatures dates back to the lifetime of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), within which extensive theological debates were held. For instance, when extremists (*ghulāt*) and deniers claimed that the sharing of beautiful names (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*) between God and His creatures implies a shared essence or state, Imam Riḍā (peace be upon him), in response, rejected this misconception and offered a detailed explanation. He stated that the description of God as pre-eternal (*qadīm*) is solely to indicate to rational beings that no one preceded Him, and that no one will be an eternal companion with Him. Similarly, God's act of describing Himself through Names (*asmā'*) is for the purpose that His

1. I asked him about the name. What is it? He said, 'It is an attribute of the described.' (Al-Kulayni, 1407, Vol. 1, p. 113)

2. By the testimony of every attribute, it affirms that it is distinct from the described, and the testimony of the described affirms that it is distinct from the attribute. (Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 343)

3. And God is called by His names, yet He is distinct from His names, and the names are distinct from Him. (Ibid., 1407, Vol. 1, p. 114)



creatures, when they are created, worship, or tested, may call upon Him by those very Names. According to *Imam al-Riḍā* (peace be upon him), the commonality between God and His servants in certain Names exists only in wording (*lafẓ*), not in meaning (*ma'nā*), and the realities denoted by these Names differ completely. He illustrated this by saying: sometimes people call others by the names of animals — such as dog or lion — while the person's true nature is not actually that of those animals. Likewise, even among creatures, the shared use of names is a verbal and not a semantic commonality. The Imam (peace be upon him) then explained certain attributes that share verbal similarity but differ in meaning — such as '*Ālim* (Knowing), *Samī'* (Hearing), *Baṣīr* (Seeing), *Qā'im* (Standing/Existing), *Laṭīf* (Subtle), *Khabīr* (All-Aware), *Zāhir* (Manifest), *Bāṭin* (Hidden), and *Qāhir* (Subduer). He expounded the distinct semantic differences among these attributes in detail. The key point in the Imam's (peace be upon him) argument concerning the shared use of *Asmā' Allāh* and *Asmā' al-Makhlūqāt* (God's and creatures' Names) is summarized in his concluding statement: The Name gathers us together, but the meaning does not. (Al-Kulaynī, 1407, vol. 1, p. 122)

In light of this *ḥadīth* and similar narrations, it appears that the shared Names between God and His creatures are shared only in expression, and that no commonality exists in meaning whatsoever. For example, in the aforementioned noble *ḥadīth*, Imam (peace be upon him) explains the Name '*Ālim* (All-Knowing) as follows: The learned among creation are so called because of acquired knowledge, knowledge that was once absent from them; when that knowledge departs, they return to ignorance. But the naming of God as '*Ālim* is because He is never ignorant of anything whatsoever. Thus, the Creator and the created only share the word 'knowledgeable,' not the reality of that knowledge.

Although the Divine Names and the names of creatures may appear similar in wording, their meanings are fundamentally different (Ibid). From this perspective, and in order to avoid the pitfalls of anthropomorphism (*tashbīḥ*) and negation (*ta'ṭīl*), and to properly understand the ḥadīths on this topic, it is necessary to be precise: On the one hand, to grasp the true meanings of the Divine Names — such as '*Ālim* (All-Knowing) and others — one must not compare them with the names and meanings used for creatures. Such comparison would lead to *tashbīḥ* (assimilation), by which we attempt to understand the meanings of God's Names through analogy with the attributes of created beings — an analogy that is rejected and invalid. On the other hand, one must not suppose that refraining from such comparison results in negating knowledge of the Divine Names. The true meanings of God's Names can be discovered only by turning to the true



interpreters of His Word, those who guide humanity toward genuine monotheism (*tawḥīd*). As shown in the previously mentioned narration, the Imam (peace be upon him) simultaneously rejects anthropomorphism and, through the true definition of the Name ‘*Ālim*, closes the door to *ta‘īl*—the denial of divine knowledge.

Our belief is that the foundation of religious sciences stems from the sacred religious texts—that is, from the Qur’ānic verses, ḥadīths, and reasoned derivations (*tafra‘*) therefrom by sound intellect. However, these derivations, when not conducted according to proper principles or when certain aspects of a topic are neglected, may yield results inconsistent with those very principles. Since the essence of human creation is grounded in servitude (*‘ubūdiyyah*)<sup>1</sup>, our approach to understanding theological and metaphysical subjects—especially concerning the Divine Names and Attributes—must likewise begin from this position. Many narrations, as will be discussed, direct our attention toward the worship of the meaning of the Name, identifying it as pure monotheism (*tawḥīd khālīṣ*)—not the worship of the outward name, nor of the name and meaning together. Hence, our focus in understanding the verbal and semantic distinctions among the Names must be upon the inner meaning (*ma‘nā*) of the Name. Therefore, one must move beyond the outward appearance and arrive at the inner reality (*bāṭin*) to reach the correct understanding. While most scholars, when discussing the shared usage of Names between God and creation, limit their discussion to the form of the Names, the narrations direct attention instead toward the inner meaning—that is, the meaning of the Name.

From these discussions, it may be inferred that the Names of creatures express the qualities of the named beings, whereas the outward words of the Divine Names cannot fully describe Him. According to the *ḥadīths*, the Divine Names were created as a means of communication between creatures and God, to call upon Him and seek from Him through them. According to the narrations, the only path to true monotheism and divine knowledge is through worship of the meaning of the Names, which is realized by attributing the Divine Names and Attributes to Him in their true sense. Therefore, some narrations explicitly command the worship of the meaning of the Name, calling it pure monotheism. This is because, based on authentic ḥadīths, the Creator and the creation share no similarity: God, being the Creator of the Names and Attributes for humankind, is absolutely incomparable to them. Expressions such as God created the Names and God

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1. Reference to the noble verse: And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me. (Dhāriyāt 51:56)



chose the Names in ḥadīths indicate that His Essence is other than the Names, and thus God must not be likened to anything. Moreover, the very existence of the Names and Attributes that God ascribes to Himself in the Qur'an signifies that knowledge of God and the pursuit of His unity must not be abandoned. The concept that unites these two notions is that of worship of the meaning, as expressed in narrations—meaning that the meaning to be worshiped transcends the Names and Attributes (which are created) and surpasses all limitations that would confine true knowledge of God. To transcend the mere word and reach the infinite meaning of the Divine Names constitutes pure monotheism, which the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) have urged upon us. Comprehending these meanings, as indicated in the Qur'an, is a knowledge accessible only to those firmly grounded in knowledge (*al-rāsikhūn fī al-'ilm*). Thus, since worship of the word of the Name equals disbelief (*kufr*), worship of both word and meaning leads to polytheism (*shirk*), and only worship of the meaning is pure monotheism (*tawḥīd khāliṣ*)—one must turn to the original and revelatory source to learn the true meaning of the Name and attain genuine monotheism, lest one fall into error.

#### ***Al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā* (The Most Beautiful Names)**

In addition to the Names and Attributes mentioned in the Qur'an, there are certain Names that God has especially reserved for Himself, referred to as *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* (the Most Beautiful Names). According to the Qur'anic verses, only God possesses these Most Beautiful Names—He must be invoked by them, and those who deviate (*ilhād*) in His Names are not to be followed<sup>1</sup>. The exclusive attribution of *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* to God in the Qur'an may indicate that, although all the Names of God are beautiful, these particular Names differ from the others and share no similarity with any created beings. Furthermore, the Qur'an does not specify which Names fall under this special category; nevertheless, God's emphasis on this title seems to draw human attention to a deeper truth. The narrational evidence for the non-participation—neither verbal nor semantic—in *al-asmā' al-ḥusnā* appears in the statement of Imam al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him): The Beautiful Names which none other is named by are His alone.

This is what God described in His Book: 'Call upon Him by them and leave those who deviate concerning His Names.' Those who deviate in His Names without knowledge associate [others with Him] without realizing it, and disbelieve while thinking they do good. Therefore, God said: 'Most of

1. Reference to the noble verse: And to Allah belong the best names, so call Him by them, and leave those who blaspheme His names. They will be recompensed for what they have been doing. (A'raf 7:180)



them do not believe in God except that they associate others with Him.’ (Yūsuf 12:106) <sup>1</sup> According to this narration, most people imagine themselves to be true believers, while in reality, unknowingly, they fall into shirk (association) because they misuse or misplace the Divine Names<sup>2</sup>. The examination of the narrations presents important and noteworthy points and definitions regarding the *al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā* (the Most Beautiful Names of God). These narrations demonstrate a direct connection between the Names of Allah and the knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). Narrations from Imam Riḍā and Imam Ja’far al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon them), which will be mentioned below, serve as evidence for this claim. Imam Riḍā (peace be upon him) said: When hardship befalls you, seek help through us from God. This is the meaning of His saying: ‘To God belong the Most Beautiful Names, so call upon Him by them.’<sup>3</sup>

Imam al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) said: By God, we are the Most Beautiful Names (*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*)—none of anyone’s deeds are accepted except through knowing us. So, call upon Him by them<sup>4</sup>. This understanding—that acceptance of human deeds by God depends upon acceptance of the wilāyah (guardianship) of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them)—is reiterated in several ḥadīths, such as: Whosoever does not accept our guardianship, God shall not raise up his deeds (Al-Kulayni, 1407, Vol. 1, p. 430). seek the true meanings of these Names from their original source and to worship those meanings. This unique mode of divine guidance constitutes a special form of command and spiritual direction toward accepting the wilāyah of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), which, in essence, is the *wilāyah* of God Himself. The outcome of such belief for humankind is a true understanding of monotheism, derived from its original source. As will be discussed later, true *tawḥīd* means acknowledging that,

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1. He has no likeness, no equal, and no partner, and to Him belong the best names that no one else can be called by. These are the names described by Allah in the Book, where He said: ‘Call upon Him by them, and leave those who blaspheme His names out of ignorance. For those who blaspheme His names without knowledge are associating partners with Him without realizing it, and they are disbelieving while thinking they are doing good.’ Thus, He said: ‘And most of them do not believe in Allah except while they associate others with Him.’ (Yusuf 12:106) These are the ones who blaspheme His names without knowledge, placing them in places they do not belong. (Bahrani, 1374, Vol. 2, p. 618-621)

2. See: the same source.

3. It is narrated from Imam Riḍā (peace be upon him) who said: When a hardship befalls you, seek help from us with Allah. And this is the meaning of Allah’s words: And to Allah belong the best names, so call upon Him by them. (Al-‘Ayashi, 1380, Vol. 2, p. 42)

4. Imam Abu Abdillah (peace be upon him) said: By Allah, we are the Most Beautiful Names of Allah—no one’s invocation is accepted except through our knowledge. (See: the same source)



just as God has no limit and is the Creator of infinite ends, so too the meanings of His Names have no limit. No matter how high one ascends in understanding and faith, one can never claim to have reached the ultimate comprehension of God's unity. This same principle extends to the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), who are, in truth, the meanings of God's Names and the only teachers of those meanings to all creatures, since the wilāyah of God and that of the Ahl al-Bayt are inseparable and continuous.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Names of God in the Station of Essence**

It must be considered that the recognition of Allah is not comparable to the recognition of material things; there is a fundamental difference. To know and understand objects, we recognize them through their names, and each name expresses the essence of the object as well as all or part of the attributes of the named thing. However, the same definition cannot be applied to the Names of Allah. This issue is clearly addressed in a narration from Imam Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) in response to a question from *Hisham bin Hakam* regarding the Names of Allah and the origin of the Name Allah<sup>2</sup>. According to this narration, the Name Allah is derived from *Ilah* (God). *Ilah* necessarily implies a deity to be worshiped. However, since the Name *Ilah* is different from the one worshiped, worshiping the Name without its meaning equates to disbelief, as it is not worshiping anything. Worshiping both the Name and its meaning together, however, amounts to polytheism and dualism, because the word 'Name' carries a meaning different from the concept of its essence and has limitations. But

1 Our Wilayah is the Wilayah of Allah. (Al-Kulayni, 1407, Vol. 1, p. 437)

2 *Hisham bin Hakam* narrated that he asked Imam Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) about the Names of Allah and their derivation. Imam replied:

O Hisham, 'Allah' is derived from 'Ilah', and 'Ilah' necessitates something that is worshiped. The Name is different from the Named. Whoever worships the Name without the meaning has disbelieved and has not worshiped anything. Whoever worships both the Name and the meaning has disbelieved and worshiped two deities. But whoever worships the meaning without the Name, that is Tawhid (monotheism). Do you understand, O Hisham?

I said, Increase me in knowledge. Imam said:

Allah has ninety-nine Names. If the Name were identical with the Named, then every Name would be a god. But 'Allah' is a meaning indicated by these Names, and all of them are distinct from Him. O Hisham, bread is a Name for that which is eaten, water is a Name for that which is drunk, clothing is a Name for what is worn, and fire is a Name for that which burns. Do you understand, O Hisham, in a way that you can use it to defend and argue against our enemies and those who take others as partners with Allah, the Mighty and Glorious?

I said, Yes. Imam said:

May Allah benefit you with this and establish you, O Hisham.

Hisham said: By Allah, no one has overcome me in my understanding of Tawhid until I reached this position.

(Al-Kulayni, 1407, vol. 1, p. 8)



if a person worships the meaning without the Name, they are a monotheist. The opinion of Imam (peace be upon him) in defining the true nature of Tawḥīd (monotheism) aligns with this concept. The elaboration of the above concept is further found in the continuation of the narration: Allah has ninety-nine Names. If all His Names were identical to the named, then every Name would be *Ilah* (God). In fact, Allah is a meaning indicated by these Names, and all of these Names are distinct from Him. For example, bread is a name for a type of food, water is a name for a type of drink, clothing is a name for something worn, and fire is a name for something that burns... (Al-Kulayni, 1407, v. 1, p. 87). On the other hand, as we see in the text of the hadith, in relation to God, the name and the named are not the same. Furthermore, God introduces Himself in the Qur'an through His names. Now, the question arises: what is meant by the names, given the words of the Imam, who does not consider the name and the named to be one and the same and sees a fundamental distinction between the two? Under what conditions can we consider God to have a name, and address Him with the names that He Himself has revealed?

Perhaps, one might initially answer this question by saying that the names refer to the divine names in the realm of action, while in the realm of essence, nothing remains but silence. Thus, praise (*tasbih*) also pertains to these names. This claim is implicit in the early part of the Imam's statement, where he interprets the divine name Allah by considering the meaning of *Ilah* and understands it as an inherent implication of the *M'alah* (worshiped object).

The Imam (peace be upon him) first mentions that worshipping the name without the meaning is not permissible, and it is even equivalent to disbelief. The reason for this is that, in the case of God, the name and the named are not the same, and the name cannot fully describe the essence of the named. In the next step, the Imam considers worshipping both the name and the meaning together as equivalent to polytheism (*shirk*). From this, it can be inferred that the Imam (peace be upon him) views the name and meaning as two distinct realities. That is, the name is one thing, and the meaning is another, and the real authority lies in the meaning. In other words, what truly introduces God is the meaning of the name, not the name itself. Finally, the Imam (peace be upon him) defines pure monotheism (*tawḥīd*) as the worship of the meaning, implying that in the worship of God, one should focus on the meaning of the names, rather than merely on the verbal expression of the names.

Certainly, as we have previously mentioned, the application and usage of divine names and attributes differ from those of human names and attributes. What has been narrated in authentic hadiths and is accepted by



the majority of Islamic scholars and commentators is that the essence of the Creator is distinct from the names that are even referenced in the sacred texts. In essence, the meaning of a name and attribute in relation to the Divine Essence differs from their meaning when applied to humans. For example, in the case of created beings, the term that refers to the essence without considering any attributes is called a name, whereas the term that refers to the essence while considering certain characteristics and qualities is called an attribute. However, in relation to God, terms such as power and knowledge, without considering the essence, are referred to as attributes, while terms like the All-Knowing or the Omnipotent, which are used with the consideration of a specific attribute, are called names (Lahiji, n.d, p 239)

It seems that the definition of names and attributes of God provided above, without considering the hadith of Imam Ṣādiq (peace be upon him)—which states that names and the named are not the same in reference to God—is incomplete and not without issues. This is because the precise meaning of the term *dhāt* (essence) has not been taken into account. According to the mentioned *hadith*, it is not possible to speak about or understand God's essence through names. When we must focus on the meaning of a name, we are outside the realm of God's essence. From this perspective, God's essence and the true understanding of it are beyond our grasp. An important point that should be given more attention, especially in light of the present writing, is that at the end of the hadith, Imam Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) refers to verse 110 of Surah Isrā. This will be further explored in the continuation of the current study (Imam Ṣādiq (as), 1400, p. 133; Nouri, 1408, Vol. 5, p. 272)

### **The Comprehensive Names of God**

For a better explanation and complete understanding of this discussion, it is necessary to begin with a Radiant hadith from the noble Messenger of Islam (pbuh): The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) was asked about the Greatest Name of Allah. He (pbuh) said: 'Every name of Allah is the Greatest. Therefore, cleanse your heart from everything other than Him and call upon Allah by whichever of His names you wish, for in reality, Allah has no name other than His names. Indeed, He is Allah, the One, the All-Prevailing (Ibid). This hadith clarifies that the essence of the Almighty Allah is beyond any particular name, and the true understanding of Allah's essence is boundless. Worshipping Him, therefore, is the true monotheism (*Tawḥīd*), as explained by Imam Ali (as) who said that true knowledge of Allah is only possible through the heart, not the eyes<sup>1</sup>. This concept can be further

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1. The eyes cannot perceive Him through the sight of the eyes, but the hearts behold Him through the realities of faith. (Al-Kulayni, 407, Vol. 1, p 98)



understood through the continuation of the aforementioned hadiths. The Prophet (pbuh) initially refers to the divine essence using the word He (هو), which indicates the inner reality of Allah, and then, afterward, refers to Him with the Divine Name Allah. To clarify the word He (هو), we refer to a narration from Imam Bāqir (as), as it is found in the exegesis of the verse Say, 'He is Allah, [Who is] One.' (Surah Ikhḷāṣ, 112:1). Imam Bāqir (A.S.) says: He is a name that points to a hidden reality. The 'He' is an indication of a fixed meaning, and the 'waw' (و) is a reference to the unseen from the senses (Al-Kulayni, 1407, Vol. 1, p. 9).

In relation to the Divine Name *Allah*, there is a hadith from Imam Riḍā (as) which is of great significance to our discussion and should not be overlooked in the context of this article. A notable aspect of this hadith is the point that the name *Allah* itself carries the meaning of the first Divine Name, which is The Most High (على عظيم)<sup>1</sup>. In other words, the manifestation of the Divine Name Allah is itself the epitome of the supreme nature of God. Since human understanding and knowledge are only possible through names and attributes, all divine knowledge is encapsulated within this exalted Name. This is why, at the conclusion of his statements, the Imam (as) refers to verse 110 of Surah Isrā. This verse is significant because it reflects the comprehensiveness and completeness of the Divine Names Allah and The Most Merciful (رحمن). Regarding The Most Merciful (رحمن), it is a specific Name, representing the perfection of divine attributes, under which all other divine qualities are included. In other words, just as Allah encompasses all Divine Names, The Most Merciful encompasses all Divine Attributes. Therefore, understanding these two Names and their meanings is sufficient for comprehending all the Divine Names and Attributes. According to the narrations regarding the definition of the Divine Name Allah, this Name is the ultimate goal. However, it is only one of the many infinites ends or levels of God's reality, and the meaning that should be sought through worship and reflection extends far beyond the limit that this one name can encapsulate.<sup>2</sup>

1. The first name that Allah, the Most High, chose for Himself is 'Al-'Aliyy al-'Azim' (The Most High, The Great), because He is the highest of all things. Its meaning is Allah, and His name 'Al-'Aliyy al-'Azim' is the first of His names, as He is the Most High, above all things. (Saduq, 1398, p. 192)

2. Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said: 'The name of Allah is not like anything else. Everything that has a name attached to it is a creation, except for Allah. As for what the tongues express or what the hands produce, it is created. Allah is a goal among other goals, but the goal is not like the goal itself. The goal is described, and everything described is a creation. The creator of things is not described by any defined attribute, for He has not been formed or made to be known through the creation of others. He has no end or limit; whatever has a limit is not Allah. The one who understands this judgment will never falter, for this is



### Glorification and the Levels of Knowledge

In a general view of this subject, we realize that on the one hand, we are confronted with the Name of God, which is specific to God and related to His actions. While worshiping its outward form leads to disbelief, based on the noble verse *سبح اسم ربك العلي* (Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High - A'la/1), it should be glorified. On the other hand, we are confronted with the meaning of God's names, which must be worshiped. Since every soul has a capacity and degree of penetration in knowledge, worshiping and reaching the meaning also has infinite levels and stages. This claim that souls and their levels of knowledge are multiple is supported by much evidence. Among these, we can refer to some philosophical schools of thought. For example, Mulla Sadra, the founder of Transcendent Theosophy, in addition to the plurality of vegetative, animal, and rational souls, believes that we cannot arrive at a single definition of man and his knowledge. In this philosophical thought, the movement of man is so subtle that it is only visible to the friends of God. Only the perfect man has reached the highest degree of thought, while the rest of humanity are striving to attain their lofty goal. This philosophy holds that all beings, whether vegetative, animal, or human, have stages of existence and knowledge (See: Mulla Sadra, 1391, p. 390). However, humans each have their own knowledge and multiple stages of wisdom and awareness (Ibid, p. 139). Furthermore, Mulla Sadra, following the teachings of the Qur'an, believes that all creatures in the universe are engaged in the glorification (tahmid) of God (Mulla Sadra, 1366, p. 146).

By this explanation, it can be concluded that Tasbih applies both to the name and to the meaning. This is because each soul, regardless of the level it reaches in Tasbih, has a higher level to attain, and the person, by acknowledging this, performs the glorification of God. This meaning is most beautifully and succinctly expressed in the phrase *Allahu Akbar* (God is the Greatest). *Takbir* (the declaration of God is Great) essentially affirms the truth that anything from the meaning and essence of God that crosses the human mind cannot represent Him fully. More precisely, even if we say that *Takbir* is itself a form of *Tasbih* and an aspect of its dimensions, we would not be speaking in vain. Therefore, if we wish to summarize the connections made in the previous pages in a few lines, we can say the following: God considers Himself as having names and beautiful attributes.

According to the words of *Imam Ṣādiq* (AS), we must be cautious that only the meaning of the name, not the word itself or even the word and its

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the pure monotheism. Therefore, pay attention to it, believe it, and comprehend it with the permission of Allah.' (Al-Kulayni, 1407, vol. 1, p. 113)



meaning together, is worshipped. This reflects the truth that the use of a name for God differs from its use for creatures. Based on the teaching of the Imam that we previously mentioned, we conclude that the names of God have been established according to the needs and conditions of the creatures. In other words, the names pertain to the divine actions of God, and in reference to the Divine Essence, we have no means to speak about God through any name.

According to verse 110 of Surah Isrā (Qur'an), even these names can be further reduced to other names and attributes. Therefore, beyond the namelessness of God in His Essence, in relation to His actions, we encounter the two comprehensive names of Allah and the attribute of *Al-Rahman*. Regarding the name Allah, as mentioned under the narration of Imam Riḍā (as), it is a name that refers to another name, which the Imam refers to as *Al-'Aliyy al-'Azim* (The Most High, The Great).

The levels and ranks of knowledge in the universe are as numerous as the souls existing in creation, and the multiplicity of souls corresponds to the number of human beings. Each of these souls glorifies God and the names and meanings of God's names in proportion to their understanding of Him. However, the true meanings of God's names always transcend the comprehension of beings, and this reality demands glorification of God in relation to the meaning of His names and attributes. The result is that the initial glorification, meaning the worship of the meaning, occurs within God's actions toward His creatures. The second meaning of Tasbih pertains to the worship of the understanding that since no higher concept can be imagined, every being must immediately glorify God in the meaning of His name as well.

The highest and purest form of knowledge, which is the most perfected knowledge, exists in the Ahl al-Bayt (the purified family of the Prophet). Therefore, the highest degree of Tasbih also resides with them.

### **Glorification of the Name**

Based on Qur'anic and Hadith evidence, it seems that the highest degree of glorification (*tasbīḥ*) is first found among the noble lights of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), and it is the glorification of the Name. This meaning can be found in a statement from Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him), which is expressed as follows: 'He (peace be upon him) said: From us is the praise, the glorification, the magnification, and the sanctification of the Most Ancient Name and the Greatest Light, the Most High, the All-Knowing, the Lord of Glory and Honor, the Creator of all beings, the Destroyer of worlds and ages, the Keeper of the Hidden Secret, and the Inaccessible Unseen, the Preserved Name, and the Concealed Knowledge (Majlesi, 1403, vol. 3, p. 137).



Regarding the glorification of the meaning, we have discussed the related matters above. Now, we must explore how the glorification of the Name of God is manifested. From the authentic reports mentioned, we have understood that the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are the embodiment of the '*Asmā' al-Husná* (the Most Beautiful Names of God). The content of these narrations contains many important points, including that one should not commit heresy (*ilhad*) in relation to the Names of God, that in times of hardship and distress, one should seek intercession through these Names to God, and most importantly, the criterion for the acceptance of deeds is the knowledge of these Names or the knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). The story of the acceptance of Prophet Adam's (peace be upon him) repentance serves as a clear example in this regard, as mentioned earlier. Of course, similar examples of these verses are found abundantly in the Qur'an, and the interpretations of these verses by the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are numerous.

It is important to note that a large portion of the verses of the Qur'an were revealed in the honor of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), and this makes it easier for us to accept this understanding. The general content of these narrations, which are found in authentic sources, states that the Qur'an is divided into four parts: one-quarter is about the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), another quarter is about the condemnation of their enemies, a third quarter deals with proverbs and stories, and the final quarter contains laws and obligations<sup>1</sup>.

Upon reviewing the narrations, we will realize that this division is not equal, and the majority of the verses are related to the first quarter, that is, the status and virtues of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). Among the narrations related to verse 31 of *Surah Al-Baqarah*, we find further evidence supporting this matter. According to these narrations, the names that Prophet *Ādam* (peace be upon him) was supposed to teach the angels were, in fact, the blessed names of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). For example, in his book, *Al-Furāt al-Kūfi*, under this noble verse, he narrates a hadith from *Imam Ṣādiq* (peace be upon him). The general content of this narration is as follows: 'God existed, and nothing else existed. Then, He created the Five Lights of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), and He named each of them with one of His Names. From the Name *Al-Hamid*, He named Mohammad (peace be upon him); from the Name *Al-Ali*, He named Ali (peace be upon him); from the Names of the Most

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1. The Quran was revealed in four quarters: one quarter about us (the Ahl al-Bayt), one quarter about our enemies, one quarter about traditions and parables, and one quarter about obligations and laws. (Al-Kulayni, 1407, Vol. 2, p. 628)



Beautiful, He named Hasan and Husayn (peace be upon them); and from the Name *Al-Fattah*, He named Fatimah (peace be upon her), peace be upon them all.' After Adam (peace be upon him) was created and saw the Light of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), he asked God to introduce them to him. God taught him their names, and by God's command, Adam (peace be upon him) informed the angels of the names of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). According to the content of this narration, the reason why the angels prostrated to Prophet Adam (peace be upon him) was because they were unaware of this secret'(see: Furāt Al-Kūfī, 1410, pp56-57). In reality, the prostration of the angels was in reverence to the sacred lights of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), and it could be said that their act, which was carried out by the command of Allah, was in fact a form of the glorification (*tasbīḥ*) of the Names (*Asma'*) that were taught by Prophet Adam (peace be upon him). In the Holy Qur'an, there are verses that directly relate to this meaning, which connects to the glorification (*tasbīḥ*) of the Names. The most important of these verses, which is mentioned in a similar manner, is the opening verse of *Surah Al-A'la*, which explicitly instructs us to glorify the Name. Referring to the verse: 'Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High' (A'la / 87:1), it is clear that the Name of Allah must be glorified, and one of the levels of glorifying Allah is through the glorification of His Names.

From the collection of statements made, we have deduced two points: First, that glorification (*tasbīḥ*) means declaring something free from faults and imperfections, whether it refers to Allah, in the sense of distancing Him from anything that is unbecoming of His majesty, or whether it refers to purifying individuals from attributes that are not fitting for them. The meaning of the purification of an individual, as explained by Ja'far Subhani, is as follows: '*Tasbīḥ*, linguistically, means the purification from faults and imperfections. In the case of purification and glorification, it is said: *Tasbīḥ* linguistically means the purification from faults and imperfections. When a person purifies someone from faults and imperfections, it is said that the person has 'glorified' (*tasbīḥ*) and 'sanctified' (*taqdīs*) them.

The second point is that, as was previously demonstrated through the narration of reliable hadiths, the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) are the embodiment of God's 'Names of Beauty' (*Asmā' al-Husnā*). Based on these statements, it can be concluded that what happens in this context is the purification (*tasbīḥ*) of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) from any claim of association in the matter of accepting the guardianship, which, by God's command, is exclusively their right. Moreover, we should not make anyone a partner in obeying them without question. This understanding is further supported by a hadith from Imam Ṣādiq (peace be upon him), which



was narrated under verse 110 of Surah Kahf.<sup>1</sup> Imam (peace be upon him), in the interpretation of this noble verse and the terms mentioned therein, states: The intended meaning of righteous work (*العمل الصالح*) is the recognition (knowledge) of the Imams (peace be upon them). And the meaning of and not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord (*وَلَا يُشْرِكْ* (بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا)) is to be submissive to the *Wilāyah* (guardianship) of *Imam Ali* (peace be upon him). This means that in his caliphate and succession, no one else can assume the position of being his successor, and no one else is worthy of succeeding the Prophet (peace be upon him), nor should anyone be made his partner in this regard<sup>2</sup>. Numerous examples can be found in the words of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) concerning the acceptance of their leadership (*Imamate*) and guardianship (*Wilāyah*), the acceptance and trust in their speech and guidance, obedience to their commands, and avoidance of what they have prohibited, and so on. Particularly, these narrations have been transmitted in the interpretation (*Tafsīr*) of Qur'anic verses and have reached us through authentic Shia books. In other words, the key *takeaway* from all the aforementioned points is that Allah, both implicitly and explicitly, commands the creation to obey the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). Since they are the manifestation and embodiment of Allah's beautiful names (*Asma al-Husna*), the glorification of Allah's names means that in matters of guardianship (*Wilāyah*) and absolute obedience to the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), we should not associate anyone with them who is not entitled to it.

This concept, as mentioned, is further clarified in the continuation of the aforementioned narration, where Imam (peace be upon him) states: 'With the guardianship (*Wilāyah*) of Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), do not accept the guardianship of anyone other than them, and their guardianship itself is the righteous deed (*al-'amal al-ṣāliḥ*). Therefore, anyone who associates a partner in the worship of his Lord, in reality, has committed polytheism (*Shirk*) in regard to our guardianship and has become a disbeliever in the truth of Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) and his *Wilāyah*, thus denying and rejecting it<sup>3</sup>

1. So, whoever hopes for the meeting with their Lord, let him do righteous work and not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord. (Surah Al-Kahf, 18:110)

2. Righteous work: He (Imam) said: It refers to the knowledge of the Imams (peace be upon them).

And do not associate anyone in the worship of his Lord: This means submitting to the *Wilāyah* (guardianship) of Ali (peace be upon him), and not associating with him in the caliphate those who do not have the right to it, nor are they worthy of it. (Bahrani, 1374, vol. 3, p. 690).

3. Do not take anyone other than the Wali (guardian) of *Ahl al-Muhammad* as your wali. Their guardianship is the righteous deed (*al-'amal al-ṣāliḥ*). Therefore, anyone who



## Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, the summary of the points made is as follows: *Tasbīh* has various forms and manifestations. As mentioned in the initial section of the article, one of the forms of Tasbih is the worship of the meaning of the divine names of Allah, which leads to monotheism (*Tawhīd*). In this case, neither the mere utterance of the words nor the combination of the word and its meaning should be worshipped, because doing so would lead to disbelief (*kufr*) and polytheism (*shirk*).

The meaning of worshipping the word can be understood as equating the literal meaning of God's names with the names of created beings. For example, believing that the definition of the name *ʿĀlim* (knowledgeable) for Allah is the same as the definition of *Alim* for a human being is considered worshipping the word and is equivalent to *kufr* (disbelief) or covering up the true meaning of God's names. Accordingly, worshipping both the word and its meaning, which is synonymous with polytheism (*shirk*), implies the belief that both the definition of a name for a creature and the definition given by the Imams for God's names are correct, and that belief in both definitions leads to *Tawhīd* (monotheism). This concept, which contradicts true belief in *Tawhīd*, further supports the argument that there is no spiritual or meaningful sharing between the names of God and the names of created beings.

An important point is that, given the multiplicity of souls and the varying degrees of knowledge, multiple interpretations of the names are received by each soul, and in reality, these can never fully represent the true meaning of the names. Therefore, these meanings also need to be glorified (*tasbīh*). The answer to the question of how the concepts of *tasbīh*, names, and their interrelation should be understood can be found in the narrations (*ahādith*) transmitted from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and the rational understanding of these narrations. Ultimately, these narrations lead us to a different interpretation of God's glorification.

The meaning that has been inferred from these narrations and understood is that, on one hand, tasbih means declaring Allah (or any person or meaning that must be worshipped) free from anything inappropriate. On the other hand, the understanding derived from the narrations regarding names and names of Allah relates to the knowledge of the leadership (*wilāyah*) of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), who are the manifestation and reflection of God's names.

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associates a partner in the worship of his Lord has indeed associated a partner with our guardianship, disbelieved in it, and denied the right of *Amir al-Mu'minin* (peace be upon him) (Ibid)



Therefore, based on the assumptions discussed, the Almighty God's command regarding the tasbīḥ of His names refers to the unconditional acceptance of the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). This means that no one should be made a partner in their leadership and obedience. Tasbīḥ of the names occurs in two forms: verbal and practical. The verbal tasbīḥ of the names is the expression of belief in the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), and the practical *tasbīḥ* of the names—which holds even more significance than the verbal *tasbīḥ*—requires that, in order to achieve true monotheism (*Tawḥīd*) and other necessary matters, one must refer to their words and conduct.

The clarification of this meaning can be found by examining other verses of the Qur'an and the interpretations and exegeses offered by the Imams of Ahl al-Bayt in connection with those verses. These verses emphasize the acceptance of their guidance, knowledge, divine teachings, and all matters those creatures need, which must be obtained exclusively through them. These are matters that should not be sought through anyone other than God's appointed representatives (*Ḥujjat Allah*). If this form of tasbīḥ is not practiced by humans, they will not achieve the true objective, and they will fail to reach real *Tawḥīd*. The inevitable consequence will be disunity, division, and misguidance. Therefore, the only path to achieving true *Tawḥīd* and advancing through its stages, according to the capacities and intellects of different individuals, is through referring to the guiding lights of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) and their words.

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