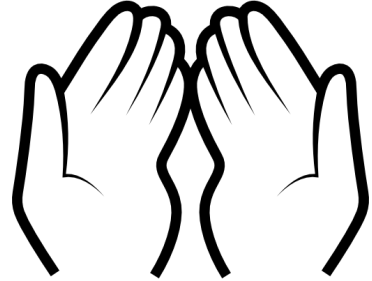
 **Remind me about *tawhīd al asma wa as-sifāt***


This implies maintaining the unity and integrity of Allāh’s Names and Attributes. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى has certain Names or Attributes, which we can use to call upon Him and understand him better. He says in the Qur’ān,

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا

*And to Allāh belong the best Names so invoke Him by them.*

*Sūrah al A’rāf, 180*




 **What is an ‘attribute’?**


The word ‘attribute’ means a quality or a feature. For example, you could say that the attribute of a good judge is ‘honesty’. Allāh has many features and qualities. He has many Attributes.

 **Why are the *al asma wa as-sifāt* so important?**

We cannot see Allāh. For us Allāh is hidden and *bil ghaib* (in the realms of the Unseen). The only way we can know about Him is to study those words that He has used to describe Himself, i.e., those texts from the Qur’ān in which He discusses His Own Names and Attributes and those *ahadīth*<sup>1</sup> where the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has described Him.

 **So, His Names and Attributes are the route to knowing Him better?**

Yes. If you do not refer to *al asma wa as-sifāt*, then you are merely speculating about Allāh, and thereby entering a very dangerous area indeed.

 **Is it recommended to learn the *al asma wa as-sifāt* of Allāh?**

Yes, it is recommended to both learn and understand them. This is the best kind of knowledge a person can acquire. It is one thing to study and excel in the worldly sciences e.g. biology, physics, economics and so on, but the most excellent subject to acquire knowledge in is knowledge about Allāh Himself. The *ālim*<sup>2</sup>, Ibn Al Arabī<sup>3</sup>, stated, “the excellence and virtue of knowledge is according to the subject matter. The Creator is the Highest and Most Excellent of subject matters and therefore the knowledge of His Names is the Most Excellent and Highest of Knowledge”<sup>4</sup>.

 **That’s great. What about the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم ? Did he encourage the same?**

The Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

<sup>1</sup> Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم . Plural of *hadīth*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ālim* = Scholar, plural is *Ulema*. All derived from root word, *ilm* which means knowledge

<sup>3</sup> Not to be confused with the 12<sup>th</sup> Century commentator Ibn ‘Alī Ibn Arabī of Andalus who held many false and heretical views regarding the Attributes of Allāh.

<sup>4</sup> Ahkām Al Qur’ān 2/993.

"Allāh has ninety-nine Names, one hundred except one, whoever memorises and comprehends them enters paradise."

Narrated by Abu Hurairah in Sahih Bukhāri



**That's even more amazing. What does it mean to 'memorise and comprehend?'**

The word being used here is *ihṣā*. Various *ulema* have commented extensively as to what this word means. One of the most notable amongst them, Ibn Al Qayyim, identified three levels to *Al Iḥṣā*:

1. Memorisation of the words used and the number;
2. Understanding their meaning;
3. Actually supplicating Allāh with those Names.



**I suppose doing this is a great exercise in *ḗmān*-building?**

When a Muslim strives to increase his knowledge of Islām and thereafter strives to act upon what he has learnt, then, with Allāh's Permission, his *ḗmān* will inevitably increase. Memorising, understanding and supplicating with the Names and Attributes of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, increases *ḗmān* and purifies the heart.



**Purifies the heart?**

When a Muslim truly comes to understand *al asma wa as-sifāt*, that understanding will be reflected in all aspects of his behaviour. For example:

- ◆ A Muslim who is battling temptation will find ease when he remembers that Allāh is *Al A'lām* (All Knowing), *Al Basīr* (All Seeing) and *As Samī'* (All Hearing);
- ◆ A Muslim who is sick and in pain will find strength when he remembers that Allāh is *Ash Shāfē* (The One who Cures);
- ◆ A Muslim who is racked with guilt over the sins he has committed and is truly repentant, will find comfort when he remembers that Allāh is *Al Ghafūr* (The Forgiving), *Al Ghaffār* (The Oft Forgiving), *Ghāfir adh Dhanb* (The Forgiver of Sin), *Ar Rahmān* (The Beneficent) and *Ar Rahīm* (The Merciful).

To quote Umar Sulaimān Al Ashqar,

*"Our knowledge of His (Allāh's) Hearing, Sight and Knowledge means that not even the weight of an atom in the heavens nor in the earth is hidden from Him, and that He is aware of secret thoughts, knows the treachery of the eyes and what the hearts conceal. This causes a person to guard his tongue and limbs as well as the whisperings of his heart from everything that does not please Allāh.*

*In addition, he links the limbs to what Allāh loves and is pleased with, which in turn creates in him modesty which enables him to avoid what is forbidden and evade shameful deeds.<sup>5</sup>"*



**How many Names and Attributes does Allāh have? Is it Ninety-nine, as mentioned above?**

No. It is 'at least' ninety-nine.

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<sup>5</sup> The Names and Attributes of Allāh, According to the Doctrine of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah ~ by Shaikh 'Umar Sulāman Al-Ashqar; Published by Jam'iat Ihyā' Minhāj Al Sunnah, Suffolk, England.

 **Are you sure? I grew up with that figure of ‘ninety-nine.’**

The majority of the *ulema* state that the number mentioned in this hadīth is not definitive. They state that the Names of Allāh, in fact, number *more than* ninety-nine<sup>6</sup>.

To cite Ibn Hajr Al Asqalāni, “*Most of the people of knowledge are of the opinion that the most Excellent Names of Allāh are not limited to this number (ninety-nine) and that there are more than this.*”<sup>7</sup>

Some *ulema* assert that the number ninety-nine implies the memorising of any ninety-nine from amongst the greater number of names. Whilst others assert that it refers to ninety-nine specific but hidden Names from the greater total.<sup>8</sup>

 **So, what is the exact figure?**

The commentators of old vary about the number of those Names and Attributes of Allāh known to mankind. They vary depending on what system they used to decide whether any particular Name is in fact a Name of Allāh.

 **Why do you say ‘known to mankind?’ Are there names that we don’t know about?**

Yes. Basically, Allāh’s Names and Attributes fall into three categories:


1. Those we know about, to be found in the Qur’ān and ahadīth;
2. Those that were revealed to other creations of Allāh, but not to us, e.g. those revealed to His angels;
3. Those Names known by Allāh alone and kept hidden from all His creation.



The Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم once supplicated to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى as follows,

“I ask you with every one of your Names with which You have named Yourself or You have revealed in Your Book or taught to any one of your creation or which You have kept to Yourself in the Knowledge of the Unseen.”

Narrated by Ibn Masūd and reported in Ahmed. Authenticated by Ibn Hibbān رضي الله عنهم

 **I will, Insha’Allāh, memorise, understand and actually start reciting the Names of Allāh. My uncle has a list of ninety-nine names on his wall. I will refer to that.**

Great, but be careful. The picture you refer to is most probably based upon a hadīth recorded by the eminent collector of ahadīth, Tirmidhi. Whilst most of the names detailed in the Tirmidhi hadīth are acceptable, the list does present a number of issues.

<sup>6</sup> The number “ninety-nine” is also mentioned in a *hadīth* from Tirmidhi, which we will discuss in a moment, Insha’Allāh.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted by Al Ashqar *ibid*, pp61

<sup>8</sup> Discussed by Al Ashqar *ibid*, pp64-66

1. It is agreed by the scholars of hadīth to be weak. It has been criticised both for its poor chain of narrators and contradictions in content;
2. It mentions names that are not acceptable according to some of the rules of classification<sup>9</sup> e.g. *Dhu Al Jallāle Wal Ikrām, As Sālim*;
3. It does not mention some names that are referred to in the Qur’ān and Sunnah and are accepted as being amongst Allāh’s Names;
4. By mentioning ‘ninety-nine’ names exactly, it assumes a restriction on the number of Allāh’s Names. As we have already discussed, the *ulema* are in agreement that the number is more than ninety-nine.

The renowned scholar Ibn Taymīyyah has commented, “*No authentic hadīth has been reported from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that specifies the ninety-nine names of Allāh*<sup>10</sup>.”

Below, is a list of generally agreed Names and Attributes of Allāh as mentioned in the Qur’ān and Sunnah. You are welcome to review it and use it to help you with *al ihsa*. However, please don’t consider it a definitive list, because (a) this is an area of debate amongst the scholars and (b), as we have discussed above, the true number is known only to Allāh.

Insha’Allāh, in the next chapter we will discuss areas that we should be careful about when examining Allāh’s Most Beautiful Names and Attributes.

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<sup>9</sup> We will study some of these rules in the next chapter Insha’Allah.

<sup>10</sup> Majmu’ al Fatawā – Sheikh al Islām; 22/482

## Allāh and His Most Beautiful Names and Attributes

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### Questions

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1. Describe as best as you can the meaning in English of *tawhīd al asma wa as-sifāt*.
2. What does the word 'attribute' mean?
3. According to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, what is the reward for memorising and comprehending Allāh's Names?
4. What does the word *ihsa* mean?
5. How many Names and Attributes does Allāh have?
6. What is the least number?
7. Do we know all the Names of Allāh? Explain.
8. Who recorded a famous hadīth that lists ninety-nine Names?
9. What are the issues with this hadīth?



Running for the trams at Taksim, Istanbul, Turkey

Just some of the  
Names and Attributes of Allāh  
which are mentioned in the  
Qur’ān and Ahadīth.

Note: This is not a definitive list

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Research for this table is primarily based upon work of Shaykh ‘Umar Sulaimān al-Ashqar in his book ‘The Names and Attributes of Allāh, According to the Doctrine of *Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama’ah*’.

Reference is also made to the list of 99 names as identified and compiled by Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Sālih al-Uthaimīn. His includes almost all of the names in al-Ashqar’s list, but does not accept others, for example An Nūr, (The Light). 12 additional Names and Attributes identified by Uthaimīn are included, 11 from the Qur’ān, with 1, Al Mu’tī, from ahadīth.

Allāh bestow His Mercy upon them both.

Numbers or words in brackets refer to references from the Qur’ān, books of ahadīth, or the additional Names as identified by Sheykh Uthaimīn.

I have tried to be as thorough and meticulous as possible in my own research of the research of the Scholars. You are welcome to review it and use it to help you with *al ihsa*. However, please don’t consider it a definitive list because (a) this is an area of debate amongst the Scholars and (b), as we have discussed in this chapter, the true number is known only to Allāh.

## ● **Allāh;**

- Al Ilah, The God, [43:84];
- Al Awwal, The First, [57:3];
- Al Ākhir, The Last, [57:3];
- Al Akram, The Most Bountiful, [96:3];
- Al Āla, The Most High, [86:1];
- Al Ahad, The One, [112:1];
- Al Badī, The Originator, [2:117];
- Al Bārī, The Producer; [59:24];
- Al Barr, The Benign, [52:28];
- Al Bātin, The Imminent, [57:3];
- Al Bāsīt, The Munificent, [Ibn Majah];
- Al Basīr, The All Seeing, [22:61];
- Ath Thawwāb, The Relenting, [2:160];
- Al Jabbār, The Compeller, [59:23];
- Al Jāmi’, The Gatherer, [4:140];
- Al Jawād, The Magnanimous, [Ath Tirmidhi];
- Al Jamīl, The Beautiful, [Muslim];
- Al Halīm, The Forbearing, [22:59];
- Al Hakīm, The Wise, [59:24];
- Al Hākīm, The All Wise, [Uthaimīn]
- Al Hayy, The Living, [2:255];
- Al Hasīb, The Reckoned, [4:6];
- Al Hafīdh, The Preserver, [11:57];
- Al Hāfīdh, The Protector, [Uthaimīn]
- Al Hamīd, The Praiseworthy, [22:64];
- Al Haqq, The Truth, [22:62];
- Al Hakam, The Arbiter, [6:114];
- Al Hafī, Al Gracious, [19:47];
- Al Hannān, The Compassionate, [Ahmed];
- Al Hayyī, The Modest, [Ahmed, Abu Dawūd, An Nasaa’ee];
- Al Khāliq, The Creator, [59:24];
- Al Khallāq, The Creator, [15:86];
- Al Khabīr, The All Aware, [22:63];

- Ad Dayān, The One Who Judges after Reckoning, [Bukhari];
- Ar Rahmān, The Beneficent, [55:1];
- Ar Rahīm, The Merciful, [59:23];
- Ar Razāq, The Provider, [51:58];
- Ar Raqīb, The Watchful, [4:1];
- Ar Ra'ūf, The Most Kind, [22:65];
- Ar Rabb, The Lord, [1:2];
- Ar Rafīq, The Gentle, [Ibn Majah];
- As Saṭīr, The One Who Veils, [Ahmad, Abu Dawūd, An Nasaa'ee];
- As Sayyad, The Master, [Ahmad];
- As Salām, The Flawless One, [Uthaimīn]
- As Samī', The All Hearing, [22:61];
- As Subouh, The Perfect, [Muslim];
- Ash Shahīd, The Witness, [Uthaimīn]
- Ash Shukūr, The Appreciative, [42:23];
- Ash Shākīr, The Rewarding, [2:158];
- Ash Shāfi, The One Who Cures, [Bukhari];
- As Samad, The Eternally Besought of By All, [112:2];
- As Sādiq, The Truthful, [6:146];
- At Tayyīb, The Good, [Ath Tirmidhi];
- Adh Dhāhir, The Evident, [57:3];
- Al 'Azīz, The Mighty, [59:23];
- Al 'Ālim, The Knower, [30:50];
- Al Alīm, The Aware, [22:59];
- Al 'Allām, The All Knower, [9:95];
- Al 'Alī, The High, [2:255];
- Al Azīm, The Immense, [2:255];
- Al 'Afou, The Pardoner, [22:60];
- Al Ghafūr, The Forgiving, [22:60];
- Al Ghaffār, The Oft-Forgiving, [39:5];
- Al Ghāfir, The Forgiver of Sin, [40:3];
- Al Ghanī, The Self Sufficient, [22:64];
- Al Fātir, The Originator, [35:1];
- Al Fattāh, The Judge, [34:26];
- Al Qahhār, The Irresistible, [39:4];
- Al Qāhir, The Invincible Subduer, [Uthaimīn]
- Al Quddūs, The Holy, [59:23];
- Al Qarīb, The Near, [11:61];
- Al Qayyūm, The Sustainer, [2:255];
- Al Qādir, The Able, [6:65];
- Al Qadīr, The Potent, [60:7];
- Al Qawwī, The All Powerful, [8:52];
- Al Qābid, The Constrictor, [Ibn Majah];
- Al Kabīr, The Great, [22:62];
- Al Karīm, The Most Generous, [82:6];
- Al Kafīl, the Guarantor, [16:91];
- Al Latīf, The Subtle, [22:63];
- Al Mālik, The Owner, [1:3];
- Al Malīk, The Sovereign, [59:23];
- Al Malīk, The King, [54:55];
- A Mubīn, The Clear and Manifest One [Uthaimīn]
- Al Mu'min, The Guardian, [59:23];
- Al Muḥīb, The Responsive, [11:61];
- Al Muhaymin, The Guardian, [59:23];
- Al Mutakabbir, The Proud, [59:23];
- Al Mussawwir, The Fashioner, [59:24];
- Al Matīn, The Firm, [51:58];
- Al Mawlā, The Patron Lord, [Uthaimīn]
- Al Muqīt, The Over-Seer, [4:85];
- Al Majīd, The Glorious, [11:73];
- Al Muhīt, The All Encompassing, [Uthaimīn]
- Al Muqtadir, The Omnipotent, [54:55];
- Al Musta'ān, The One Whose Help is Sought, [21:112];
- Al Muhyīy, The Giver of Life, [41:39];
- Al Muta'ālī, The Most High, [13:9];
- Al Mannān, The Benefactor, [Ahmad, Abu Dawūd, An Nasaa'ee];
- Al Muhsin, The Charitable, [al Kaamil];

- Al Mājid, The Illustrious, [Ath Tirmidhi];
- Al Muqaddim, The Advancer, [Bukhari];
- Al Mu'akhkhir, The Retarder, [Bukhari];
- Al Mus'irr, The Price Setter, [Ibn Majah];
- Al Mu'tū, The Giver, [Uthaimīn]
- An Nasīr, The Helper, [4:45];
- An Nadhīf, The Pure, [Ath Tirmidhi];
- An Nūr, The Light, [24:35];
- Al Hādī, The Guide, [25:32];
- Al Wahhāb, The Bestower, [3:8];
- Al Wāsi', The Vast, [2:268];
- Al Wadūd, The Loving, [85:14];
- Al Wāriṯ, The Inheritor, [50:23];
- Al Wakīl, The Trustworthy Disposer of  
Affairs [Uthaimīn]
- Al Walīy, The Protector, [42:28];
- Al Wāhid, The One, [39:4];
- Al Witr, The Single, [Muslim].