

- Muntaqā al-akhbār*. Ed. ‘Iṣām al-Dīn al-Ṣabābiṭī. 8 vols. Miṣr (Cairo): Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1413/1993.
- Sībawayh, Abū Bisr ‘Amr b. ‘Uthmān. *al-Kitāb*. Ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn. 4 vols. 3rd ed. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānaji, 1408/1988.
- al-Suyūṭī, Jalāl al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. *Tanwīr al-ḥawālik sharḥ Muwaṭṭa’ Mālik*. 2 vols. Miṣr: al-Maktabat al-Tijāriyya al-Kubrā, 1389/1969.
- Suyūṭī. *Durr*.
- Suyūṭī. *Itqān*.
- Ṭabarānī. *Mu’jam*.
- Ṭabarī. *Tafsīr*.
- al-Ṭabrīzī, Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Khaṭīb. *Mishkāt al-Maṣābiḥ*. Ed. Muḥammad Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Albānī. 3 vols. 3rd ed. Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1985.
- Tha’labī. *Kashf*.
- Tirmidhī. *Sunan*.
- Zabīdī. *Tāj*.
- Zajjāj. *Ma’ānī*.
- Zamakhsharī. *Kashshāf*.
- Zarkashī. *Burhān*.
- al-Zayla’ī, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. Yūsuf. *Nash al-rāya li-ahādīth al-Hidāya*. Ed. Muḥammad ‘Awwāma. 4 vols. Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Rayyān, 1418/1997.
- al-Zurqānī, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Bāqī b. Yūsuf. *Sharḥ al-Muwaṭṭa’*. 4 vols. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1411/1991.

**See also:** ABLUTION; ABROGATION; ABŪ BAKR; ĀDAM, UPON HIM PEACE; ALLAH, MOST HIGH; ALLIANCE AND TREATY; ANONYMOUS MENTIONS; AL-ANṢĀR; ARABIC; BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH; BLESSINGS, BOUNTY, AND FAVOR OF ALLAH; CANONICAL READINGS; COMMUNITY; DESCENT OF THE QUR’ĀN; ENORMITIES; IḤSĀN; FACE OF ALLAH; FALSEHOOD; INTERCESSION; JĀHILIYYA; JIBRĪL; LANGUAGE AND SPEECH; MUḤĀJIRŪN; MUḤAMMAD, UPON HIM BLESSINGS AND PEACE; NŪḤ, UPON HIM PEACE; OCCASIONS OF REVELATION; OPENING LETTERS; PURIFICATION; QUR’ĀN; QURAYSH; AL-RAḤMĀN; REMEMBRANCE AND REMINDER OF ALLAH; REVELATION; RITUAL PURITY AND IMPURITY; SABA’; SEVEN MODES; SULAYMĀN, UPON HIM PEACE; SURĀ; UNLETTERED; WAR.

NASEER AHMAD  
MUZAFFAR IQBAL

## Beard

See FACE; BODY

## Beating

See LEGAL PUNISHMENTS

## BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH

ASMĀ’ ALLĀH AL-ḤUSNĀ

This article comprises the following sections: i. Definitions, Usage, Etymology; ii. The Naming, the Named, and the Attribute; iii. The Names as Divinely Ordained or Deducible/Conventional; iv. The Hadith of the Ninety-Nine Names; v. Name Lists in al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah; vi. Ja’far al-Ṣādiq’s and Sufyān b. ‘Uyayna’s Qur’ānic Lists; vii. “Allah has Ninety-Nine Names” may be Specific but not Exhaustive; viii. Ibn Ḥazm’s Restrictive List of Eighty-Four Names; ix. Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Qur’ānic List of One Hundred Forty-Six Names; x. Ibn Ḥajar’s Quintessential List of Ninety-Nine Names; xi. Ibn al-Wazīr’s Inclusive Lists of Two Hundred Twenty-Eight Names; xii. The Four Invocations that Incorporate all the Divine Names; xiii. Pairing (*Iqtirān*) of Certain Names in the Qur’ān; xiv. Commentary Literature on the Divine Names; xv. Glossary and Sources of Selected Names; xvi. The Greatest Name; xvii. The Use of Divine Names by Human Beings; xviii. Bibliography.

The Most Beautiful Names of Allah (*asmā’ Allāh al-ḥusnā*), together with the Divine Attributes (*ṣifāt*), constitute Allah’s naming and description of Himself. Knowledge of and belief in them form the essence of pure monotheism (see TAWḤĪD), increasing understanding of the Divine (see ALLAH MOST HIGH). This article summarizes the scholarship on the Names and their sourcing, as well as provides English translations and brief exegeses of several selected Names.

### Definitions, Usage, Etymology

The Qur’ān uses the phrase “the most beautiful Names” (*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*) in relation to Allah Most High in four verses: *To Allah belong the most beautiful Names, so invoke Him by them. And leave the company of those who blaspheme His Names. They will be requited what they do (Q 7:180); Say: Call unto Allah or call unto the All-Beneficent (al-Raḥmān); whichever you call upon, His are the most beautiful Names (Q 17:110); Allah! There is no god except He; His are the most beautiful Names (Q 20:8); He is Allah—the Creator, the Originator, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful Names; whatever is in the heavens and the earth declares His glory; and He is the Mighty, the Wise (Q 59:24)*. The first two verses (Q 7:180; 17:110) were reportedly revealed when, on separate occasions, Abū Jahl and another Makkan polytheist, hearing Muslims call unto *al-Raḥmān*, wondered

aloud why “Muḥammad and his friends claim to worship a single God, yet they call upon two?” (*Tafsīrs* of Muqātil, Samarqandī, Baghawī, Tha‘labī, Ibn al-‘Arabī, Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Juzayy, Tha‘alibī, *sub* Q 7:180 and 17:110). It is also related that the Prophet, upon him blessings and peace, would dictate “In Your Name, O Allah, our Lord” (*bi-smik Allāhumma*); after *In the name of Allah be its course and its mooring* (Q 11:41) was revealed he would dictate (or order written) *bi-smil-Lāh*; after *Say: Call unto Allah or call unto the All-Beneficent (al-Raḥmān)* (Q 17:110) was revealed he would dictate *bi-smil-Lāh al-Raḥmān*; and after *Verily it is from Sulaymān and verily it is In the name of Allah, the All-Beneficent, the Most Merciful* (Q 27:30) was revealed he would dictate *bi-smil-Lāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (*Tafsīrs* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim, ‘Abd al-Razzāq, Jaṣṣās, Baghawī, *sub* Q 27:30; Ibn ‘Aṭīyya and Qurṭubī, *sub* Q 1:1) (see *BASMALA*).

The most beautiful Names in these four verses have been glossed as the “ninety-nine Names” that are referred to in the sound hadīth of Abū Hurayra (d. 58/678) (see below), then individually listed in its later interpolations and interpretations, including Names found only in the Hadīth (*Tafsīrs* of Abū al-Layth al-Samarqandī, Tha‘labī, Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Juzayy, Ibn ‘Ajība, *sub* Q 7:180 and 59:24; Jalālayn, *sub* Q 20:8 and 59:24). *Blaspheming His Names (yulḥidūn fī asmā’ih*, see *BLASPHEMY*) in Q 7:180 has been glossed as “naming Allah in an inappropriate way, such as what we hear the Bedouins (*q.v.*) say in their ignorance: ‘O father of noble traits (*yā abā al-makārim!*)’ ‘O fair-faced one (*yā abyad al-wajh!*)’ ‘O gallant one (*yā nakhī!*)’ or their (the Makkān pagans’) refusal to call Him by some of His beautiful Names, such as saying ‘yā Allah!’ but not ‘yā Raḥmān!’” (Zamakhsharī, *sub* Q 7:180). Makkī al-Qaysī (d. 437/ca.1045) glossed *they blaspheme (yulḥidūn)* in Q 7:180 as referring to a linguistic corruption of the Divine Names intended to refer to idols (*q.v.*) (Makkī, *Hidāya*; cf. Tha‘labī, *Kashf*).

The Names of Allah are described as “the most excellent (*aḥsan*) names because they point to excellent meanings of rendering majesty, exalting [Him] and so forth” (Zamakhsharī, *sub* Q 7:180); and because they reflect magnification (*ta‘zīm*), yield Paradise as a reward according to the Divine promise, attract hearts through Divine generosity and mercy, teach which aspects of His description are necessary, possible, or impossible with respect to Him, and constitute the noblest type of knowledge conceivable, since their referent is the Almighty (Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Aḥkām*).

The root *ḥ-s-n* from which is derived “most

beautiful” (*aḥsan*) signifies not only beauty (*ḥusn*, *q.v.*)—whereby it is the antonym of ugliness (*qubḥ*)—but also goodness, in which sense it is the antonym of evil (*sū’*) (al-Fārābī, *Dīwān al-adab* 2:6, *sub* *fu’lā*; 2:277, *sub* *fa’ula yaf’ulu*) as well as excellence (*ihṣān*) (*q.v.*), so that, ultimately, “what is *ḥasan* is deemed so from the perspective of reason (*min jihat al-‘aql*), from the perspective of proclivity (*min jihat al-ḥawā’*), and from the perspective of the senses (*min jihat al-ḥiss*)” (Rāghib).

Although grammarians have given “almost seventy different definitions for *ism* (noun, name)” (Ibn al-Anbārī, *Asrār al-‘arabiyya*, p. 5), it has been defined mostly as “a word that intrinsically points to a particular meaning unconnected with any of the three tenses” (al-Ṣayigh, *al-Lamḥa*, Bāb al-ism; cf. al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāṣid* 4:338, vii: Fī Asmā’ Allāh, al-ism; al-Aḥmadnagarī, *Muṣṭalahāt*, p. 109, *al-ism*), and described as “a marker (*alāma*) for something, if we say *ism* is derived from *wasama* (to describe); and the evidence (*dalīl*) that brings it up to the intellect if we say it is derived from *sumuww* (height)” (Bayḍāwī, *sub* Q 2:31). In the strict sense a name is underived, for otherwise it is not a name but an attribute—“a [differentiating] rule stipulated by al-Sibawayh (d. 180/796) which the Law neither confirms nor denies” (Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Aḥkām*, *sub* Q 7:180). For since the Name *Allāh* alone has been claimed to be truly non-derived, and at any rate is qualified by all the other Names, while it itself qualifies none of them, hence literally they are attributes (al-Juwaynī, *al-‘Irshād*, p. 138, al-Qawl fī ma‘ānī Asmā’ Allāh; Rāzī, *Lawāmi‘*, p. 80-81; al-Rāzī 1:162-164, Muqaddima ix: fī-l-mabāḥith al-muta‘alliqa bi-qawlinā *Allāh*). Typically, moreover, the name or noun is “the only one of the three parts of speech—noun (*ism*), verb (*fi‘l*), and particle (*ḥarf*)—that is governable by a preposition of attraction (*ḥarf jarr*)” (opening words of Mubarrid’s *Muqtaḍab*). Ibn Ḥazm (384-456/994-1064) deems *ism* an original word in itself, “not derived from anything whatsoever but a name devised by convention like *ḥajar* (stone), *raml* (sand), *khashba* (plank), and every other non-derived name” (*al-Fiṣal* 5:137, al-Kalām fī-l-ism wal-musammā). Al-Bayḍāwī (d. 685/1286) in his commentary on the *Basmala* makes it clear he believes the etymology of *ism* to stem from *s-m-w*, in conformity with the position of the grammarians of Baṣra, rather than *w-s-m* as claimed by the Kūfans. He also, like Ibn Ḥazm before him, considers “the Names” to mean literally the actual words (*alfāz*) that stand for them (*sub* Q 1:1 and 7:180; cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Fiṣal* 5:136,