

Mohd Sani, "Divine Names as the Standard of Ethics: A Translation of Ibn al-'Arabī's Concise Explanation of *al-Asma' al-Husna*," *Afkar* Vol. 25 No. 2 (2023): 35-66

**DIVINE NAMES AS THE STANDARD OF
ETHICS: A TRANSLATION OF
IBN AL-'ARABĪ'S CONCISE EXPLANATION
OF *AL-ASMĀ' AL-ḤUSNĀ***

Mohd Sani Badron

Centre for Economics and Social Studies. Institute of
Islamic Understanding, Malaysia (IKIM). Langgkak Tunku
Off Jalan Tuanku Abdul Halim.
50480. Kuala Lumpur. Malaysia.

Email: sani@ikim.gov.my

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol25no2.2>

Abstract

The article submits that one of the most interesting notions in Islām is that the Names and Attributes of Allāh, also function as the standard of ethical manners and praiseworthy deeds. In order to clarify this notion—wherein there is an inevitable continuity of theology, worship and ethics—this article presents a translation of Ibn al-'Arabī's (560/1165—638/1240) concise explanation of the Divine Names (*al-asmā' al-ḥusnā*). Given the fact that by his own claim, Ibn al-'Arabī is 'the seal of Muḥammadan sainthood' (*Khātim al-Awliyā' al-Muḥammadiyyah*), and by his followers' estimation 'the supreme preceptor' (*al-Shaykh al-Akbar*), the annotated translation's contribution to present-day knowledge includes his notion of the oneness of the Divinity, list of some of the Divine Names, and understanding of their realities and meanings. At that ontological plane of the Divine Oneness, the Essence describes Himself according to His Beautiful Names and Sublime Attributes, all of which require recognition and acknowledgement by His servants for their own well-being in relation to *takhallaqū bi-akhlāqillāh*.

Keywords: Allāh; Oneness; divinity (*al-ulūhiyyah*); names (*al-Asmā' al-ḥusnā*); attributes (*ṣifāt*); Islamic ethics; Ibn al-‘Arabī.

Khulasah

Makalah ini menghujahkan bahawa salah satu faham paling menarik dalam agama dan tamadun Islām adalah bahawa Nama-nama dan Sifat-sifat Allāh yang juga memainkan peranan sebagai penanda aras untuk adab dan perilaku yang terpuji. Bagi menjelaskan konsep ini - di mana terdapat kesinambungan yang tidak dapat dielakkan antara usuluddin, ibadah, dan akhlak - makalah ini menyajikan terjemahan ringkas penjelasan Ibn al-‘Arabī (560/1165-638/1240) mengenai *al-Asmā' ul-Ḥusnā* (Nama-nama Indah Allah). Harus diingat bahawa Ibn al-‘Arabī telah menyatakan dirinya sebagai “*Khātim al-Awliyā' al-Muḥammadiyah*”, dan dinilai sebagai “guru teragung” (*al-Shaykh al-Akbar*) oleh para sarjana pengikutnya, sumbangan terjemahan yang diberi nota-kaki ini kepada dunia ilmu semasa adalah merangkumi perkara berikut: kefahaman beliau tentang *tawḥīd*, senarai Nama-nama Ilahi Yang Maha Indah, serta pemahaman tentang hakikat dan makna Nama-nama Ilahi. Pada tahap hakikat *tawḥīd*, Allah menyatakan Diri-Nya sejelas Nama-nama yang Maha Indah dan Sifat-sifat yang Maha Luhur, yang kesemuanya mewajibkan pengakuan dan pengiktirafan oleh para hamba-Nya untuk kebaikan mereka sendiri dalam konteks titah *takhallaqū bi-akhlāqillāh*.

Kata kunci: Allāh; *tawḥīd*; *ulūhiyyah*; *al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*; *ṣifāt*; akhlak; Ibn al-‘Arabī.

Introduction

Islam consists in faith in Allāh’s Names and Attributes (*al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā*), which function as the standard of ethical

manners and praiseworthy deeds.¹ It means man ought to emulate Divine Attributes as faithful as possible; it is analogous to a disciple who progressively imitates his master, with the difference that this is the Perfect, Eternal Master. To employ Qur’ānic terms, it is a vicegerent reflecting his Sovereign,² the former dyeing his self or soul in the latter’s Divine Colour.³

As a framework for Islamic ethics, an explanation of the beautiful names of Allāh as well as of their implications in human virtues and meritorious actions has been offered by many scholars, among the greatest are al-Ghazālī,⁴ al-Rāzī,⁵ and Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām.⁶ This article intends to contribute to such themes by offering an annotated translation of Ibn al-‘Arabī’s concise explanation of the Most Beautiful Divine Names, found in the Shaykh’s magnum opus the *Futūḥāt*.⁷ In order to facilitate readers of

¹ Shibli Nomani & Syed Suleman Nadvi, *Siratun Nabi*, 7 vols. (Karachi: Darul Ishaat, 1999-2003), vol. 4, Prophethood and Beliefs, tr. Rafiq Abdur Rehman, 355ff.

² *Al-Baqarah*, 2: 20.

³ *Al-Baqarah*, 2: 138.

⁴ *Al-Maḥṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Ma’ānī Asmā’ Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, ed. Bassām ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī (Limassol: al-Jaffān wa al-Jābī, 1987). Three English translations are available within these three decades: Robert Charles Stade, *Ninety-Nine Names of God in Islam: A Translation of the Major Portion of al-Ghazālī’s al-Maḥṣad al-Asnā* (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1970); David B. Burrell & Nazih Daher, *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1992); and, Ahmed Moustafa, *The Attributes of Divine Perfection: The Concept of God in Islam* (London: Fe-Noon Ahmed Moustafa (UK) Limited, 2007).

⁵ *Lawāmi’ al-Bayyināt Sharḥ Asmā’ Allāh Ta’ālā wa al-Ṣifāt*, ed. Ṭāhā ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf Sa’d (Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyayāt al-Azhariyyah, 1976).

⁶ *Shajarat al-Ma’ārif wa al-Aḥwāl wa Ṣāliḥ al-Aqwāl wa al-A’māl*, ed. Iyād Khālid al-Ṭabbā’ (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu’āshir, 1991; reprint, 1996).

⁷ *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (Cairo: n.p., 1911, repr. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 4: 322-6. Also quoted in *al-Fiqh ‘ind al-Shaykh al-Akbar Muḥy*

the following rendition, each Divine name is enumerated, and important Islamic Arabic terms are given in brackets.

The Translation

1. He is *Allāh* the Exalted, with respect to His Ipseity (*Huwiyyah*) and Essence (*Dhāt*).

2. *Al-Raḥmān*—The Most Merciful, Whose Grace is universal, extending to and embracing all things.⁸

3. *Al-Raḥīm*—The Most Compassionate, by what He obligates Himself for His repentant servants.⁹

4. *Al-Rabb*—The Lord Who brings into existence the things that are good (*al-maṣāliḥ*) for His creation (*khalq*).¹⁰

5. *Al-Malik*—As the dominion over heavens and earth belongs to Him,¹¹ The King: The Possessor (*Rabb*) and Owner (*Malik*) of everything.¹²

al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī, ed. and presenter Maḥmūd Maḥmūd al-Ghurāb (Damascus: the author himself, 1981, 2nd impression, 1990), 105-111.

⁸ For Allāh's saying that "My Mercy overspreads everything", see the Qur'ān, hereinafter cited as Q., *al-A'rāf*, 7: 156. See Q. *Ghāfir*, 40: 7, too. See also Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Jalāl wa al-Jamāl*, in *Rasā'il Ibn al-'Arabī* (Hyderabad-Deccan: Dā'iratul Ma'ārifil-Osmania, 1948), 12.

⁹ *Al-Raḥmān*—which is more intensive in signification than *al-Raḥīm*—including in its objects the believer and the unbeliever; *al-Raḥīm* having for its peculiar object the believer, particularly in the Hereafter (*al-ākhirah*). Bayḍāwī, quoted in Edward William Lane, *An Arabic English Lexicon*, hereinafter cited as *Lexicon* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863, repr. in 2 vols. by Islamic Texts Society, 1984), 1: 1057.

¹⁰ *Al-Rabb* also means *al-Thābit* (the Unchanging, the Fixed One); see Su'ād al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mu'jam al-Ṣūfī: al-Ḥikmah fī Hudūd al-Kalimah*, hereinafter cited as *Mu'jam* (Beirut: Dandarrah li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr, 1981), 506.

¹¹ On this, see His own sayings in the Q., for examples: *al-Baqarah*, 2: 107; *Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 189; *al-Mā'idah*, 5: 17, 18, 40, 120; *al-A'rāf*, 7: 158; *al-Tawbah*, 9: 116; *al-Nūr*, 24: 42; *al-Furqān*, 25: 2; *al-Zumar*, 39: 44; *al-Shūrā*, 42: 49; *al-Zukhruf*, 43: 85; *al-Jāthiyah*, 45: 27; *al-Fath*, 48: 14; *al-Ḥadīd*, 57: 5; *al-Burūj*, 85: 9.

¹² This Name occurs in Q. *al-Ḥashr*, 59: 23; *al-Jumu'ah*, 62: 1; *al-Nās*, 114: 2.

6. *Al-Quddūs*—The All-Holy, Who says "they have made no just estimate of Allāh,"¹³ as applied to those who associate other gods with Allāh,¹⁴ those who invoke those other than Allāh,¹⁵ and those who 'play at vain talk,' saying that "Allāh has never revealed anything unto man."¹⁶ He is the All-Holy, free from everything that they describe Him with.¹⁷

7. *Al-Salām*—The Flawless, over every disapproved human description.¹⁸

8. *Al-Mu'min*—The Faithful, Who trusts His servant.¹⁹ He is also the Faithful, who protects and gives them security and freedom from fear (*al-amān*), if they fulfil His covenant.²⁰

9. *Al-Muḥaymin*—The Determiner of His servants in all their states, whether it is in what is to their advantage or in what is to their disadvantage.²¹

10. *Al-'Azīz*—The All-Mighty, Who overpowers those who vie to overcome Him, as He is not viable with at all.²²

¹³ For His sayings that "They have no true understanding of Allāh," see Q. *al-An'ām*, 6: 91; *al-Ḥajj*, 22: 74; *al-Zumar*, 39: 67.

¹⁴ Q. *al-Zumar*, 39: 67.

¹⁵ Q. *al-Ḥajj*, 22: 74.

¹⁶ Q. *al-An'ām*, 6: 91.

¹⁷ *Al-Quddūs* is found in Q. *al-Hashr*, 59: 23, *al-Jumu'ah*, 62: 1.

¹⁸ *Al-Salām* is found in Q. *al-Hashr*, 59: 23.

¹⁹ Such is also explained by al-Zabīdī as 'the Believer (*al-Mu'min*) of His servants the Muslims, on the Day of Resurrection, when the nation shall be interrogated respecting the messages of their Messengers.' Quoted in *Lexicon*, 1: 103.

²⁰ See also *Mu'jam*, 141. For Q. see *al-Hashr*, 59: 23.

²¹ Q. *al-Hashr*, 59: 23.

²² The following Divine sayings in the Qur'ān are enlightening to Ibn al-'Arabi's discussion on those who vie to overcome Him: "Those who resist Allāh and His Messenger will be among those most humiliated. Allāh has decreed: 'It is I and my messengers who must prevail': for Allāh is One full of strength (*qawiyy*), able to enforce His Will ('*azīz*)" (*al-Mujādalah*, 58: 21); "Say to those who reject Faith: 'Soon will you be vanquished and gathered together to Hell—an evil bed indeed (to lie on)!'" (*Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 12); and, "The unbelievers spend their wealth

He is also the Unattainable, Who is impossible to be estimated in His sublime holiness (*imtinā' fī 'uluww qudsi-Hi an yuqāwama*).²³

11. *Al-Jabbār*—The All-Compeller, in what He forces His servants to, in their exigence (*iḍṭirār*) as well as in their volition (*ikhtiyār*),²⁴ as they are in His 'handful' (*qabḍah*).²⁵

12. *Al-Mutakabbir*—The Grand in Majesty, by what He educes in His descent to feeble soul,²⁶ in His secret gracefulness (*khafīy alṭāf*) towards those who approach Him by limit (*ḥadd*) and measure (*miqdār*), such as inching (*shibr*), arming (*dhirā'*), fathoming (*bā'*), hurrying (*harwalah*), receiving joyfully (*tabashbush*), rejoice (*farah*), wonder (*ta'ajjub*), and laughing (*ḍahk*).²⁷

13. *Al-Khālīq*—The Creator Who determines thing (*al-taqdīr*), and brings it from nonexistence into existence (*ījād*) according to the decree.

to hinder (men) from the path of Allāh, and so will they continue to spend; but in the end they will have (only) regrets and sighs; at length they will be overcome: and the unbelievers will be gathered together to Hell—in order that Allāh may separate the impure from the pure, put the impure, one on another, heap them together, and cast them into Hell. They will be the ones to have lost." (*al-Anfāl*, 8: 36-37).

²³ Ibn al-'Arabi is referring to one of the meanings of 'azīz as difficult or hard: and impossible, insuperable, or unattainable. See *Lexicon*, 2: 2032, on the authorities of *Tāj al-'Arūs*, *Shihāh*, and *Qāmūs*. Ibn Fāris defines 'Azīz as "shiddah wa quwwah wa mā dāhā-huma min ghalabah wa qahr", while al-Khalīl states that "al-'izzah lillāh jall thanā' u-Hu."

²⁴ Commenting Q. *al-Ḥashr*, 59: 23, authorities like al-Bayḍāwī and Jalālayn understands *al-Jabbār* as "the Compeller of His creatures to do whatsoever He wills". See *Lexicon*, 1: 375.

²⁵ Meaning "in His possession alone," and "at His free and absolute disposal." See Q. *al-Zumar*, 39: 67. For *Jabbār* in Q., see *Ibrāhīm*, 14: 15, *Ghāfir*, 40: 35, *Qāf*, 50: 45, *al-Ḥashr*, 59: 23, *al-Shu'arā'*, 26: 130.

²⁶ Al-Zabīdī's *Tāj al-'Arūs* states He is *Al-Mutakabbir* as "He has rights which no other has, the Possessor of Power and Excellence the like of which no other possesses, He Who disdains having the attribute of created being." *Lexicon*, 2: 2587.

²⁷ For *al-Mutakabbir* in Q. see *Ghāfir*, 40: 27; for *mutakabbir* among mankind, see *Ghāfir*, 40: 35; on *Jabbār* and *Mutakabbir*, see *al-Ḥashr*, 59: 23.

14. *Al-Bāri'*—The Generator, Engenderer, Producer or Originator, Who gives existence to the upshots of basic essences or elements (*muwalladāt al-arkān*).²⁸

15. *Al-Muṣawwir*—The Former.²⁹ He bestows forms, to all existing things, in the ontological mote or dust (*al-habā'*).³⁰ He also bestows the forms of His manifestation, in the eyes of the one to whom He manifest Himself, regardless whether the manifestation is denied or recognized by the person, regardless whether the manifestation is comprehended or incomprehensible by him.

16. *Al-Ghaḥfār*—He is full of forgiveness, Who covers the sins of His faithful servants, as said in a tradition, *ghafara Allāh la-hu*, 'may Allāh cover his sins' i.e., forgive or pardon him.³¹

17. *Al-Ghāfir*—The All-forgiving, Who is attributed with clemency (*al-yasīr*). As a certain Arab says, "*as'alu-*

²⁸ *Rukn al-shay'* means 'the essence of the thing,' 'that whereby the thing subsists (*al-taqawwum*),' or 'that without which the thing has no subsistence (*al-qiyām*).' The authorities are Jurjānī's *Kitāb al-Ta'rifāt* and Abū al-Baqā's *al-Kulliyāt*, quoted in *Lexicon*, 2: 1149. For *al-Bāri'* in the Q., see *al-Baqarah*, 2: 54.

²⁹ We do not translate *al-Muṣawwir* as 'the Bestower of Forms' lest it be confused with another name *al-Wahhāb*. Indeed, the Divine Name *al-Muṣawwir* is rendered as 'the Former' in these standard English lexicons and dictionaries: E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2: 1745; Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, ed. J. Milton Cowan, 3rd printing (Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974, repr. Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1980), 530. It is to be noted that, that Lane's translation was done after he has considered an explanation of al-Zābīdī's *Tāj al-'Arūs*. To be noted also is that William C. Chittick's *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 37 translates it as 'the Form-giver'.

³⁰ Ibn al-'Arabī discusses *al-habā'* in *Futūḥāt*, 1: 5, 78, 118, 121, 140; 2: 130, 150, 433; 3: 107, 420, 444; 4: 19. ed. 'Uthmān Yaḥyā, vol. 3, para. 636. *Uqlat al-Mustawfidh*, ed. H. S. Nyberg, in *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-'Arabī* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1919), pp. 39-99 on p. 56, 59. See *Mu'jam*, 1095-6.

³¹ See also *Lexicon*, 2: 2273, on the authority of *Tāj al-'Arūs*.

Ka al-ghafīrah wa al-nāqah al-ghazīrah wa al-‘izz fī al-‘ashīrah fa-inna-hā ‘alay-Ka yasīrah" (I beg of Thee (O God) forgiveness, and a she-camel abounding in milk, and might among the kinsfolk, for they are to Thee things easy).

18. *Al-Ghafūr*—The All-forgiving, by letting loose His veils, whether it is the veil of the worlds (*al-akwān*), or of others.

19. *Al-Qahhār*—The Overcomer of His servants, who ignorantly dispute with Him and do not repent towards Him.

20. *Al-Wahhāb*—The bountiful Dispenser, Who confers gifts (*al-‘atā’*) to His servants—just to favour them—neither to compensate them, nor so that He will be thanked or praised by them.

21. *Al-Karīm*—The Generous, as He gives to His servants what they ask from Him.

22. *Al-Jawād*—The Bountiful, as He gives before being asked from,³² so that His servants will be grateful to Him and He gives them more and more,³³ and so that they will remember Him and He rewards them abundantly.

23. *Al-Sakhī*—The Munificent, Who ‘gives every thing its creation’³⁴ and rendering completely to it its due.

24. *Al-Razzāq*—The Provider, Who supplies sustenance to all things that are nourished, including minerals, plants, animals, and human, with no condition of faith or otherwise.

25. *Al-Fattāḥ*—The Opener, Who opens the gates of grace (*ni‘am*), punishment (*‘iqāb*) and suffering (*‘azāb*).

26. *Al-‘Alīm*—The All-Knowing, of His many objects of knowledge (*ma‘lūmāt*).

³² That *Jawād* refers to the one who gives without being asked, is corroborated by Muḥammad Ibn al-Ṭayyib al-Fāsī, author of the *Annotations of the Qāmūs*. See *Lexicon*, 2: 482.

³³ See *Q. Ibrāhīm*, 14: 7.

³⁴ *Q. Tā Hā*, 20: 50

27. *Al-'Ālim* —The Knower, of the oneness of His Essence (*Nafs*).

28. *Al-'Allām*—The very Knowing, of the unseen realities (*al-ghayb*).³⁵

29. *Al-Qābiḍ* —He Who grasps everything with the hand,³⁶ by the fact that things are in His handful, as He says that the whole of the earth is His handful;³⁷ and, that the alms being in the hand of the Most Merciful and He holds it.

30. *Al-Bāsiṭ*—The One who gives abundantly, through the granting of the provision (*al-rizq*) of the means of subsistence. Such an abundant gift is not granted to the wicked (*al-baghy*), since the provision is 'the ascertainable measure' (*al-qadr al-ma'lūm*).³⁸ What He does take away or give abundantly³⁹ pertains to the fact that there is probation (*ibtilā'*) and well-being (*maṣlahah*) of the servants in His provision of their means of subsistence.

³⁵ The Name *al-'Allām* is particularly related to the unseen realities. While the finite, things that can be seen (*al-shahādah*), which are evolved into exterior existence (*al-wujūd*), pertain to witnessing (*al-shahādah*) and viewing (*al-ru'yah*), the infinite, unseen realities (*al-ghayb*) remain eternally in the Divine Knowledge (*ma'lūm*), which are impossible things (*muḥāl*). We follow Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's interpretation, that *these* impossibles are those 'realities, each established in itself, such as those forms of the Divine Names that come under the circumspective sway of the principal Name, the Inwardly Hidden, which remain eternally in the Unseen, forever concealed from outward existence in the interior condition.' See his *On Quiddity and Essence: An Outline of the Basic Structure of Reality in Islamic Metaphysics* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1990), 48-9; idem., *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islām: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islām* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), 258-9.

³⁶ *Lexicon*, 2: 2483, on the authorities of the *Qāmūs*, Abū 'Uthmān al-Māzinī, and *Tāj al-'Arūs*.

³⁷ Meaning in His possession alone, and at His free and absolute disposal. See *Q. al-Zumar*, 39: 67.

³⁸ *Q. Al-Ḥijr*, 15: 21. The same term is also used in *al-Mursalāt*, 77: 22.

³⁹ *Q. Al-Baqarah*, 2: 245.

31. *Al-Rāfi'*—The Exalter, in Whose hand is the balance (*al-mīzān*) of justice (*al-qisṭ*) that abases or exalts ones. He exalts justice, so that, as the King, He might give to whomsoever He will, endue with honour whomsoever He will, and make satisfied whomsoever He will.

32. *Al-Khāfiḍ*—The Abaser, Who strips off power from whom He wills,⁴⁰ Who abases whom He wills,⁴¹ and Who impoverishes whom He wills. In His hand is all good, which is the balance. He renders to the entitled ones the full extent of their rights.⁴²

33. *Al-Mu'izz*—The Honourer, of the obedient servants. In worldly life, He honours by giving wealth, by granting certainty to the People who deserve it, and by conferring the power to rule the world through effective command and force.

34. *Al-Mudhill*—The Humiliator, Who disgraces the disobedient servants in worldly life, the tyrants (*al-jabbārīn*)⁴³ and despots (*al-mutakabbirīn*).⁴⁴ He also

⁴⁰ Q. *Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 26.

⁴¹ Q. *Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 26.

⁴² Under such a condition, the dealing is not gratuitous, as rendering what is due is a relation more general than gratuitous rendering. To be noted too is His saying in the Q., *khāfiḍah rāfi'ah (al-Wāqi'ah*, (56): 3) applied on the Resurrection Day (*al-qiyāmah*), means 'abasing certain persons to Hell, exalting certain persons to Paradise,' or 'abasing the disobedient, exalting the obedient.' This interpretation is on the authorities of *al-'Ubāb*, *al-Qāmūs* and *al-Zajjāj*, see *Lexicon*, 1: 774.

⁴³ For example, the tribe of 'Ād has been noted as following the bidding of every arrogant enemy of the Truth (*jabbār 'anīd*; see Q. *Hūd*, 11: 59, also *Ibrāhīm*, 14: 15). They behaved tyrannically with other people (*jabbārīn*; see *al-Shu'arā'*, 26: 130), too, and was destroyed through "a raging storm-wind on a day of bitter misfortune" (*al-Qamar*, 54: 19, 69: 6-8), "a storm wind furiously raging... for seven nights and eight days without cease' and 'pursued by (God's) rejection (*la'nah*)" (*Hūd*, 11: 60).

⁴⁴ Q. *Ghāfir*, 40: 27 notes the story of Moses against Pharaoh and his people, who are like the one who is immersed in false pride (*mutakabbir*), unbelieving in the Day of Reckoning (*yawm al-ḥisāb*).

humbles some faithful believers during their life in this world in order to honour them in the Hereafter. He also humbles those whom He has appointed as an heir of humility due to their faith and obedience.

35. *Al-Samī'*—The All-hearing, Who answers the prayer of His servants, who pray to Him in their exigencies (*muhimmāt*).

36. *Al-Baṣīr*—The All-seeing, of the affairs of His servants, like His saying to Moses and Aaron, "Fear not: for I am with you: I hear and see."⁴⁵ The meaning of His seeing is not merely His witnessing and seeing—as that is a fact (*ḥaqīqah*) regardless whether He helps or forsake ones, whether He looks after or neglects ones. But His seeing is more so means His bestowing protection and security and freedom from fear (*al-amān*).

37. *Al-Ḥakam*—The Arbitrator, Who will judge between His servants on the Day of Resurrection.⁴⁶ He is also the Arbitrator, Who reveals the prescribed Revealed Law and inspires the wise man-made law.

38. *Al-'Adl*—The Just, Who commands the truth and establishes the perfect form of religion (*al-millah al-ḥanīfiyyah*).⁴⁷ The truth—as He states in the Qur'ān, "Say: 'O my Lord! Judge Thou in truth!'"—means an inclination towards Him, as those who follow the rule of caprice (*hawā*) go astray from the way of Allāh.

39. *Al-Laṭīf*—The Gracious towards His servants, whom He bestows well-being (*al-'āfiyyah*) that is infolded in unpleasant prescription (*al-adwiyyah al-karīhah*), of

In verse 35, they are described as "those who dispute concerning the signs of Allāh, without any authority come to them....so Allāh set a seal on every arrogant, self-exalting (*mutakabbir jabbār*) heart."

⁴⁵ Q. *Ṭā Hā*, 20: 46.

⁴⁶ Cf. Q. *al-Ḥajj*, 22: 17.

⁴⁷ See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islām: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality* (Kuala Lumpur: 1st published by Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1976, 2nd impression Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992), 14-15.

revealed Religion. There is no simile that is subtler for the Gracious than a tender medication that contains cure and repose: the medicament has no effect at the time when it is applied, yet we do know that it does put the remedy into operation, we just do not feel it due to its delicacy. Among the domain of His subtlety also is His permeation throughout the acts of existent things, as He says, "but Allāh has created you and your actions,"⁴⁸ yet we do not see any act except of the created things, while we do know that the Actor of those acts is Allāh, Who could be seen if not due to His subtlety.

40. *Al-Khabīr*—The One Who tries His servants, putting them to test. Among the tests is His saying, "until We know" (*hattā na'lam*),⁴⁹ so that He could observe whether or not we ascribe to Him originatedness in His Knowledge. Note also this subtlety; due to this, *al-Khabīr* is combined with *al-Laṭīf* in His sayings, [as in the following two Qūr'ānic verses,] "See you not that Allāh sends down from the sky, and forthwith the earth becomes clothed with green? For Allāh is He Who understands the finest mysteries and is well-acquainted (with them)";⁵⁰ "should He not know—He that created? And He is the One that understands the finest mysteries (and) is well-acquainted (with them)."⁵¹

41. *Al-Halīm*—The Forbearing, or the Clement, by granting a respite albeit He is all-aware: He does not hastily punish those who commit evil out of ignorance while they are trying to get rid of their ignorance by always asking and thinking until they know the truth.

⁴⁸ *Al-Ṣāffāt*, 37: 96.

⁴⁹ Q. *Muḥammad*, 47: 31—"And We shall assuredly try you until We know those of you who struggle and are steadfast, and try your tidings".

⁵⁰ Q. *Al-Hajj*, 22: 63.

⁵¹ Q. *Al-Mulk*, 67: 14.

42. *Al- 'Azīm*—The Tremendous, in the hearts of His knowers (*al- 'arīfīn bi-Hi*).⁵²

43. *Al-Shakūr*—The One Who rewards much, Who gives more and more to His servants than what they have been remembering and thankful to Him, through their obedient acts and observation of His limits (*ḥudūd*), prescriptions (*rusūm*), commands (*awāmir*) and proscriptions (*nawāhī*). He treats His servants according to His saying that, "if you are grateful, I will add more to you."⁵³ By Himself being the One Who rewards much (*Shakūr*), He seeks His servant to do their utmost in themselves being grateful to Him.

44. *Al- 'Alī*—The Exalted in His Nature (*Sha 'n*) and Essence (*Dhāt*), beyond the characteristics that befit temporally originated things (*simāt al-ḥudūth*), and beyond the attributes that are appropriate to non-eternal things (*ṣifāt al-muḥdathāt*).⁵⁴

45. *Al-Kabīr*—The Incomparably-Great, beyond those that are set up by the polytheists as gods (*ālihah*). While the Prophet Abraham has a sound faith and belief (*al-i 'tiqād al-ṣahīh*) that it is Allāh Who destroys the idols taken as gods until they become shreds (*judhādḥ*), the Prophet Abraham knows that the idol-worshippers do describe Greatness (*al-Kubr* or *al-Kibar*) to Allāh the Exalted, Who is above their gods even as they claim that, "we worship them for no other reason than that they bring us nearer to Allāh"⁵⁵. That is why the Prophet Abraham says, "This was done by their

⁵² *Al- 'Azīm* may also be translated as All-Mighty or All-Glorious. See also in the Q. *al-Baqarah*, 2: 255, *al-Wāqī'ah*, 56: 74. On the tremendous awesome experience of His knowers, see, e.g., *Intuition of Existence*, 11-16; *Prolegomena*, 185-9.

⁵³ Q. *Ibrāhīm*, 14: 7.

⁵⁴ On *al- 'Aliyy* in the Q., see *al-Baqarah*, 2: 255, *al-Nahl*, 16: 3, *al-Ḥajj*, 22: 62, *al-Qaṣas*, 28: 83, *Luqṣmān*, 31: 30, *Sabā'*, 34: 23, *Ghāfir*, 40: 12, *al-Shūrā*, 42: 51, *al-Jinn*, 72: 3, *al- 'Alā*, 87: 1, and *Muḥammad*, 47: 35.

⁵⁵ Q. *Al-Zumar*, 39: 3.

biggest one (*kabīr*). This (fact); ask them, if they can speak intelligently!"⁵⁶ Had the idols speak, they would acknowledge—that they are servants (*'abīd*), and—that Allāh is the Incomparably-Great, the Exalted, the Tremendous (*al-Kabīr al-'Alī al-'Azīm*).⁵⁷

46. *Al-Ḥafīẓ*—The All-preserver, Who is the Encompasser of all things (*bi-kull shay' muḥīṭ*).⁵⁸ He compasses things round, in preserving their existence, as they are recipients of both nonexistence and existence. Those whom He wants to give existence, He gives existence to them and sustains their existence for them. Those whom He does not want to give existence, and He wants them to remain in nonexistence, He preserves them in nonexistence, they do not exist as long as He preserves them in nonexistence, whether eternally, or until certain time (*ajal musammā*).

47. *Al-Muqīt*—The Nourisher, Who 'measures all things in the earth to give their due proportions of nourishment (*al-aqwāt*),'⁵⁹ and Who 'assigns to each heaven its duty and command (*al-umūr*).'⁶⁰ He gives nourishment to nourished objects in the proportion of a 'known, certain measure' (*miqdār ma'lūm*).⁶¹

48. *Al-Ḥasīb*—The Reckoner or the Taker of accounts, by enumerating His kindness (*ni'am*), so that you might see His grace (*minnah*) to you even when you are ungrateful to Him. He is not punishing you for your ungratefulness due to His indulgence (*ḥilm*) and

⁵⁶ Q. *Al-Anbiyā'*, 21: 63.

⁵⁷ On *al-Kabīr* in the Q., see *al-Ra'd*, 13: 9, *Luqmān*, 31: 30, *Sabā'*, 34: 23, *Ghāfir*, 40: 12.

⁵⁸ Q. *Al-Nisā'*, 4: 126; *Fuṣṣilat*, 41: 54. Cf. *al-Ṭalāq*, 65: 12.

⁵⁹ See Q. *Fuṣṣilat*, 41: 10. *Aqwāt* (sing. *qūt*) refers to the things by means of which body is sustained, such as nutriment, victuals, provisions, aliment, nourishment, food, and viands.

⁶⁰ See Q. *Fuṣṣilat*, 41: 12.

⁶¹ Cf. Q. *al-Ḥijr*, 15: 21. The same term is also used in *al-Mursalāt*, 77: 22.

benevolence (*karam*); He even makes up for your shortcomings, there is no God except He the Omniscient, the Wise (*al-'Alīm al-Ḥakīm*).

49. *Al-Jalīl*—The Magnificent, Who is insurmountable, and imperceptible to the eyes (*abṣār*) and hearts (*baṣā'ir*).⁶² But He does descend⁶³—in the sense that befits His Majesty—respecting that 'He is with His servants wheresoever they may be.'⁶⁴ He descends up to the point that He could say to His servant, "I was ill but you did not visit Me. I was hungry but you did not feed Me. I was thirsty but you did not give Me to drink."⁶⁵ He descends Himself to His servants in place of His servants. This is among the predicaments or properties of this Divine Name *al-Jalīl*.⁶⁶

50. *Al-Raqīb*—The Vigilant, the One Who is watchful over everything, by imposing upon Himself to preserve His creation, without it being a burden at all, so that He might teach His servants, that they should feel ashamed to Him, as He is taking care of them.⁶⁷

51. *Al-Mujīb*—The Answerer, of those who pray to Him. This is due to His proximity (*qurb*), and to His

⁶² As al-Raghīb al-Aṣḥāhānī says, *al-Jalīl* is applied to Allāh because He is too great to be comprehended within limits (*yajill 'an al-iḥāṭah bi-Hi*) or too great to be perceived by the senses (*yajill an yudrak bi al-ḥawāss*). See *Lexicon*, 1: 437.

⁶³ Note that, from a root word *j-l-*, while *jalāl* (infinitive noun of the verb *jalla*) means 'being great', *julūl* (another infinitive noun of *jalla*, too), means 'going forth', from one's place of abode to another place (see *Lexicon*, 1: 436), which is also the meaning of *jāl*, which is derived from *j-l-w*, the root word of another important term in Ibn al-'Arabī's thought, *tajallī* (*Lexicon*, 1: 448). Furthermore, the verb *jallala*, whose infinitive noun is *tajlīl*, means 'It included things universally, within the compass of its effects' and hence 'He covers (a thing or things)' or 'He got, was or became, upon, or over, a thing or things.' See *Lexicon*, 1: 436.

⁶⁴ See Q. *al-Ḥadīd*, 57: 4.

⁶⁵ Muslim, *Birr*, 43.

⁶⁶ On *al-Jalīl*, see also *Mu'jam*, 1210n4; on *Dhū al-Jalāl*, see *Mu'jam*, 1210n.4. *Dhū al-Jalāl* is found in Q. *al-Raḥmān*, 55: 27, 78.

⁶⁷ On *al-Raqīb* in Q., see *al-Mā'idah*, 5: 117.

listening to the prayer of His servants, as He tells about Himself that, "when My servants ask thee about Me, I am indeed close (to them): I respond to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Me."⁶⁸ He describes Himself as Speaker (*Mutakallim*), as the Answerer is He Who is possessing reply (*man kāna dhā ijābah*); reply here means response (*talbiyah*).

52. *Al-Wāsi* —The Vast in bountiful gift, by granting the grace that extends to all created things⁶⁹ (*makhlūqah*). As such, He has Mercy upon everything and does away His Wrath against His servants. Observe that there is an amazing mystery in His sayings, "My Mercy extends to all things"⁷⁰ and "everything is perishing except His Face."⁷¹

53. *Al-Ḥakīm*—The All-Wise, Who bestows everything its place (*bi-inzāl kull shay' manzilata-hu*) and puts it in its degree (*bi-ja'li-hi fī martabati-hi*). As he to whom wisdom is granted receive indeed much good (*khayran kathīran*);⁷² He indeed says of Himself that in His hand is all Good,⁷³ and the Prophet says, "And all Good is in Thy hands" (*wa al-khayr kulluhu bi-yaday-Ka*). Nothing other remains, the Prophet continues his saying, 'and Evil is not imputable to Thee' (*wa al-sharr laysa 'alayk*).⁷⁴

54. *Al-Wadūd*—The Loving-Kind, Who is Established in His Love of His beloved servants; their disobedience does not affect the Love that had already preceded. This is so, as the sins do not come upon these beloved servants except by way of the prior determination of Divine judgment and decree (*al-qaḍā' wa al-qadar*), not because of God's expulsion (*al-tard*) of, and distancing (*al-bu'd*)

⁶⁸ Q. *Al-Baqarah*, 2: 186.

⁶⁹ See Q. *al-A'rāf*, 7: 156. Cf. *Ghāfir*, 40: 7: "His reach in mercy is over all things."

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Q. *al-Qaṣaṣ*, 28: 88.

⁷² See Q. *al-Baqarah*, 2: 269.

⁷³ See Q. *Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 26.

⁷⁴ *Muslim*, *Musāfirīn*, 102; *Nasā'ī*, *Iftitāh*, 17. *Lexicon*, 2: 1524.

from, them. The fact that His forgiveness precedes the fault of the beloved servants is stated in the Qur'ān, "that Allāh may forgive you, your faults of the past and those that are yet to come."⁷⁵

55. *Al-Majīd*—The All-Glorious, as Glory (*al-sharf*) is due to Him more than to all things glorious. Since the glory of the universe is by the fact that the universe is related to (*mansūb ilā*) Allāh, as it is He Who creates and acts upon it, the universe is not glorious-by-itself (*mā huwa sharfuhu bi-naḥsi-hi*). The Real Sublime (*al-Sharīf 'alā al-ḥaqīqah*) is He Who is Glorious by Himself (*man Sharfuhu bi-Dhāti-Hi*), none save Allāh.⁷⁶

56. *Al-Bā'ith*—The Rouser, in both, the general and particular senses. In its general sense, He is the Arouser Who quickens the possibles (*mumkināt*) from nonexistence to existence.⁷⁷ In its particular sense of raising in states of being (*al-aḥwāl*), He is the Sender of His Messenger (*ba'ith al-Rasūl*). He also quickens us from this world (*al-dunyā*) to the intermediary world (*al-barzakh*), at sleep and after death. He also rouses us from the intermediary world to the resurrection (*al-qiyāmah*). All rousings in the world—happen in states and essences (*fī ḥāl wa 'ayn*)—come from the Name *al-Bā'ith*, one of the most wonderful Name that the Truth calls Himself in order to teach His servants.

57. *Al-Shahīd*—The Trusty Witness in His testimony of Himself, that there is no god but He.⁷⁸ He is also the Faithful *in favor of* His servants' well-being (*al-khayr wa*

⁷⁵ Q. *al-Faṭḥ*, 48: 2.

⁷⁶ *Al-Mājid* is found in Q. *Hūd*, 11: 73.

⁷⁷ According to Ibn al-'Arabī, none realize such a rousing, except the ones who affirm the fixed essences (*a'yān thubūtiyyah*) of possible things, even if such an affirmer has no spiritual experience that the higher Sūfīs are indicating to. As Being or Existence (*al-Wujūd*) is identical with the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*), none stir up the possible things from nonexistence to existence except Allāh, by this particular Name *al-Bā'ith*.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Q. *Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 18.

al-sa'ādah), if they obey Him and His Messenger, and have good morality (*makārim al-akhlāq*); the Faithful *against* His servants in their sinful disobedience (*mukhālafāt*) and bad morality (*safāsif al-akhlāq*), so that they see the bountiful gift (*minnah*) and kindness (*karam*) of Allāh to them when He forgives and excuses them. According to Him, they will ultimately return (*ma'āl*) to the all-encompassing Mercy (*shumūl al-rahmah*). They will ultimately enter such profusion (*sa'ah*) as they are among the things (*al-ashyā'*). Allāh does not cause those things called disobedience to emerge from nonexistence into existence except by His Mercy, disobedience is a created thing via Mercy, which is its cause of existence and the locus upon which it subsists, as disobedience does not subsist-in-itself but rather subsists-in-the soul of the disobedient. As disobedience is a created thing by Mercy, it praises its Creator by His praise, and asks Divine forgiveness for the locus wherein it subsists until the existence of its essence manifest, so that it knows it does not subsist-by-itself.

58. *Al-Ḥaqq*—The Real, True Being,⁷⁹ Whom no Falsity (i.e., Nonexistence) can approach, from in front (*bayn yadayhi*) or behind (*khalf*).⁸⁰ He is the Real, True Existence (*wujūd ḥaqq*) that exists neither out of, nor followed by, nonexistence, which is contrary to the creation (*al-khalq*) that exists out of, and followed by, nonexistence, respecting which they do not realize, as existence and existentiation never end. The universe—whether in this world or in the Hereafter—is nothing but a never-ending (*ghayr intihā'*) and an unceasing (*lā inqitā'*) existence and

⁷⁹ *Lexicon*, 1: 608, after the authorities of Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazīrī's *Nihāyah* and al-Zabīdī's *Tāj al-'Arūs*, translates *al-Ḥaqq* as 'the Really-existing; whose existence and divinity are proved to be true.'

⁸⁰ See Q. *Fuṣṣilat*, 41: 42.

vision (*wujūd wa shuhūd*). The essences are manifest and seen.⁸¹

59. *Al-Wakīl*—The One Who entrusts something to the servants for their well-being and best interests (*maṣāliḥ*). Among these is His command to them to spend a specified amount (*al-infāq 'alā ḥadd mu'ayyan*). In this example, He appoints them as His representative (*khalīfah*) (i.e., spending that specified amount), after they have trusted Him (*wakīl*) that His command is in their own best interest, and for their own well-being. Property (*māl*) has dual aspects: on the one hand property belongs to Him; it is from this aspect that He appoints them as His representatives in spending it. On the other hand, property belongs to human beings; from this aspect they trust Him on how to handle it according to His Revealed Law. Property is theirs as far as it is useful for them; property is His as far as it is the means for them 'to praise His glory' (*tasbīḥi-hā bi-ḥamdi-Hi*). Those who take a lesson from the glorification point of view would say that Allāh does not create the universe except for the sake of their worshipping Him;⁸² those who consider the practical usefulness would say that Allāh does not create the universe except that some of them may get benefit from some thing else.

60. *Al-Qawiyy al-Matīn*—The Possessor of strength; the strength here refers to His Absolute 'izzah—which signifies the quality of 'impossibility,' 'insuperableness,' or 'unattainableness'⁸³—over the possible things that do not accept opposites. The authority and strength of this Name *al-Qawiyy al-Matīn* is manifest as He creates human imaginative faculty as well as the world of imagination, which are capable enough to receive and make manifest the coincidence of opposites (*al-jam' bayn al-aḍḍād*). While the coincidence of opposites (*al-jam' bayn al-ḍiddayn*)

⁸¹ On Ibn al-'Arabī's term *al-Haqq*, see *Mu'jam*, 337ff.

⁸² See *Q. Al-Dhāriyāt*, 51: 56.

⁸³ See *Lexicon*, 2: 2031, col. 3.

cannot be accepted by the sensitive and rational faculties, it is acceptable for the imaginative faculty. Both, the world of imagination and the imaginative faculty are the closest signs of the Truth, Who is at once 'the First and the Last and the Manifest and the Hidden.'⁸⁴

61. *Al-Waliyy*—The Granter of victory, to those who, by believing in Him, let Him triumph over. His help is metaphorical (*majāz*) and necessary. It is metaphorical, as He says, "if ye will aid Allāh, He will aid you."⁸⁵ It is necessary, as He says, "and it was due from Us to aid those who believed."⁸⁶ The previously quoted verse is like another verse "your Lord hath prescribed for Himself Mercy: verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), lo! He is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful".⁸⁷ But what is His help compared to His bounty (*ittisā'*)? While the help of Allāh is similar to His prescribed Mercy, it is also different from His Mercy, which is of Immense Gratitude (*rahmat al-*imtinān al-wāsi'ah**).

62. *Al-Ḥamīd*—As the Eulogizer (*Ḥāmid*) in the tongue of all extollers and in-Himself; and as the Eulogized (*Maḥmūd*) as He is lauded in all things that are praised and by-Himself, as the ends of commendation (*'awāqib al-*thanā'**) return to Him.

63. *Al-Muḥṣī*—The Taker of account of each thing, or the Comprehender of everything in the enumeration (*kull*

⁸⁴ See Q. *al-Ḥadīd*, 57: 3. *Al-Matīn*, tr. into Malay by 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Singkel in his Malay tr. of the Q. as '*Yang Mempunyai Kuat yang Sangat*' (Mecca: al-Maṭba'ah al-Amīriyyah, 1951). Its root M-T-N has been defined by Ibn Fāris's *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah as ṣalābah fī al-shay' ma'a imtidād wa ṭawl*: Ed. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū 'Amrū (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), 973. The term is Q. *al-Dhāriyāt*, 51: 58.

⁸⁵ Q. *Muḥammad*, 47: 7. For a semantic analysis of the concept of *majāz*, see *The Degrees of Existence*, (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1994) 31-4; *Prolegomena*, 293-7.

⁸⁶ Q. *Al-Rūm*, 30: 47.

⁸⁷ Q. *Al-An'ām*, 6: 54.

shay' 'adadan). This refers to exterior *existential* realities (lit. existential alphabets, *hurūf wujūdiyyah*)⁸⁸ and outward *existential* essences (*a'yān wujūdiyyah*); existential, as enumerable things must be finite, and finitude does not pertain except to *existent* things (*mawjūdāt*). In His saying, "and He takes account of every single *thing*" (*wa aḥṣā kull shay' 'adadā*), the thingness (*al-shay' iyyah*) therein is the thingness of exterior existence (*shay' iyyat al-wujūd*).⁸⁹

64. *Al-Mubdi'*—The Originator, Who starts creation by giving existence to non-existent things, in the second order (*al-rubah al-thāniyah*) of Existence. Everything in this world that has been manifested, that is manifest, and that is going to manifest—is there in the second order (of Existence); there is no third order. The first order belongs to the Truth, Who is the First.⁹⁰ Creation (*al-khalq*)—as far as its existence is concerned (*min ḥayth wujūdi-hi*)—never is in the first order (*lā yakūnu fī al-Awwal abadan*); creation pertains to the second, last order. The Truth is, nevertheless, with the creation in the last order, as He is with the universe wheresoever they may be;⁹¹ note that the Truth calls Himself the Last (*al-Ākhir*),⁹² too.

65. *Al-Mu'īd*—The Repeater, of His very Act (*'ayn al-fi'l*), with respect to the fact that He is always the Creator and Actor and Maker and Doer.⁹³ He, when creating a thing and completing it, returns to create another creation. Nothing is repeated in the universe; things are rather

⁸⁸ Our interpretive translation of Ibn al-'Arabi's *hurūf* as 'realities' is based on Su'ād al-Hakīm's study of relevant texts by Ibn al-'Arabi and his learned commentators al-Qūnawī, al-Qayṣarī, al-Nāblusī, and Aḥmad Khayrī. See her *Mu'jam*, 320-23.

⁸⁹ Q. *Al-Jinn*, 72: 28. To be noted is 'Abdullāh Yūsuf 'Alī's new ed. with rev. trans. and commentary, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'ān* (Maryland: Amana, 1992), 1549n5753: 'There is nothing which we do, nothing which happens that is outside His account'.

⁹⁰ See Q. *al-Ḥadīd*, 57: 3.

⁹¹ See Q. *al-Ḥadīd*, 57: 4.

⁹² See Q. *al-Ḥadīd*, 57: 3.

⁹³ *Al-Khāliq*, *al-Fā'il*, *al-Jā'il*, and *al-'Āmil*, respectively.

similarly renewed (*amthāl taḥduthu*) by Allāh—i.e. His ever-new creation (*al-khalq al-jadīd*)—and essences that are given existence (*a'yān tūjadu*) by Allāh.

66-67. *Al-Muhyī*—The Life-Giver, meaning, the One Who gives existence to every permanent archetype (*'ayn thābitah*), whose predicament is receptive to His existentialisation (*qabūl al-ijād*). The Truth gives existence to the permanent archetype in the interior condition of His Being (*awjada-hā al-Ḥaqq fī wujūdi-Hi*).⁹⁴ In the next, second moment (*al-thānī*), as it were, He is *al-Mumīt*, the Killer, of that existent thing: the period of its existence in the first moment is not extended. Death pertains to the state of existence; from this state of existence, the permanent archetype is separated and moved: He returns the permanent archetype to its characteristic of fixity (*thubūt*) upon which it *is*. After such a fact, it is impossible to say that the existence of a permanent archetype could be brought to an end; the permanent archetype would not be brought to an end as there is no limit in fixity.

68. *Al-Ḥayy*—The Living-in-Himself, so that what is attributed to Him would be truly established, as attributions are not ascribed except to those who are in a living condition (*shart*).

69. *Al-Qayyūm*—The Self-Subsisting, with respect to the fact that it is by Him that every soul and all that it does subsist (*Huwa Qā'im 'alā kull nafs bi-mā kasabat*)⁹⁵.

70. *Al-Wājid*—The Finder: the One Who finds what He seeks and then overtakes it. A runaway could never escape Him, just as the seeker of the knowledge of Him can never enclose His Reality.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ See also S. M. N. al-Attas, "The Wordview of Islām: An Outline," in *Islām and the Challenge of Modernity*, ed. Sharifah Shifa al-Attas (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1996), 34-35; *Prolegomena*, 13: 'His creating is...His wills'.

⁹⁵ See Q. *al-Ra'd*, 13: 33.

⁹⁶ That is because, His Reality—that is Existence—pervades everything. It is self-sufficient in Its eternal plenitude. Such a meaning of not

Mohd Sani, "Divine Names as the Standard of Ethics: A Translation of Ibn al-
'Arabi's Concise Explanation of *al-Asma' al-Husna*," *Afkar* Vol. 25 No. 2
(2023): 35-66

71-72. *Al-Wāḥid al-Aḥad*—The Unique, the One with respect to His godhood (*ulūḥah*), there is no God except He (*lā ilāh illā Huwa*).⁹⁷

73. *Al-Ṣamad*—The Eternal Resource, the Everlasting Refuge, the One eternally besought by all, to Whom we have recourse to in our affairs. By this, we take Him as our Trustee (*Wakīl*).⁹⁸

74-75. *Al-Qādir*—The All-Powerful, Who has the effective power (*al-Nāfidh al-Iqtidār*) over recipients of existence (*qawābil*), wherein He wills to make His Power becomes manifest (*zuhūr al-Iqtidār*). *Al-Muqtadir*—The All-Powerful, over our deeds (*mā 'amilat aydīnā*), as Power belongs to Him (*al-iqtidār la-Hu*). Even as the deed becomes manifest from our hands (or power, *aydīnā*), every hand that acts in the universe is—as it were—the hand of Allāh, as Power (*al-Iqtidār*) belongs to Him. He the Exalted is the All-Powerful-in-Himself (*Qādir bi-Nafsi-Hi*), the All-Determiner-in-us (*Muqtadir bi-nā*).

76-77. *Al-Muqaddim al-Mu'akkhkir*—He is both the Promoter and the Postponer of those whom He wills when He wills (*man shā'a lammā shā'a*); the Promoter and the Delayer of those whom He wills upon what He wills (*man shā'a 'ammā shā'a*).

78-79. *Al-Awwal al-Ākhir*—The First by being Necessary (*bi al-Wujūb*), The Last as all affairs return to Him.⁹⁹

80-81. *Al-Zāhir al-Bāṭin*—He is always the Manifest-in-Himself (*li-nafsi-Hi zahara fa-mā zāla Zāhiran*), and He is always the Hidden, never known, concealed from His

being in want, or need, is indeed denoted by *Wājid*. See *Prolegomena*, 132.

⁹⁷ *Lā ilāha illā Huwa* ('There is no God except He') is stated by Allāh in twenty-nine verses of the Qur'ān.

⁹⁸ *Al-Ṣamad* occurs once in Q. *al-Ikhlāṣ*, 112: 2.

⁹⁹ Q. *Hūd*, 11: 123. See also on *al-Awwal wa al-Ākhir* in *Mu'jam*, 171. The Name is Qur'ānic, *al-Ḥadīd*, 57: 3.

creation (*'an khalqī-Hi baṭāna, fa-mā yazālu Bāṭinan, fa-lā yu 'rafu abadan*).¹⁰⁰

82. *Al-Barr*—The Very Benign, by the profuse beneficence (*iḥsān*), kindness (*ni'am*) and blessing (*ālā'*) that He bestows to His servants.

83. *Al-Tawwāb*—The Ever-Relenting, by coming back much to His servants, so that they might turn to Him in repentance, upon which He returns to them with rewards.

84. *Al-Muntaqim*—The Avenger, against those who disobey Him, in order to purify (*taḥīr*) them. He accomplishes avenge by purging retribution against the disobedient in this world in the implementation of legal punishment (*iqāmat al-ḥudūd*) and in the pain (*ālām*) inflicted to the unjust. All these are hidden reprisal (*intiqām*) and retribution (*jazā'*) that is not realized by anyone. Even the ache of suckling (*ilām al-raḍī'*) is a reprisal (*jazā'*).

85. *Al-'Afuww*—He is at once the Giver of both what is much and what is little, as He gives distinction to some over others, in terms of excellence and mediocrity (*qillah wa kathrah*).¹⁰¹

86. *Al-Ra'ūf*—The Very Affectionate, Who manifests what is good (*ṣalāḥ*) and what is better (*aṣlāḥ*) to His servants, as they are subject to change (*al-maqlūb*; see *al-Baqarah*, 2: 142-3). Affection (*ra'fah*) is part of favourable compassion (*al-shafaqah*).

87. *Al-Wālī*—The Ruler-in-Himself. He is also the One Who holds command over all things; Who holds

¹⁰⁰ Al-Zabīdī's *Tāj al-'Arūs* understands *al-Zāhir* as 'He Who is veiled from the eyes and imaginations of created beings.' *Lexicon*, 1: 221. See also on *al-Zāhir wa al-Bāṭin* in *Mu'jam*, 1279. The Names are Qur'ānic, *al-Ḥadīd*, 57: 3.

¹⁰¹ According to Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-'Afu* comprises both—giving what is much and what is little, giving distinction to some over others in terms of excellence and mediocrity—because, like *al-Jalīl* (the Magnificent), *al-'Afu* is inevitably one of the Divine Names with opposite aspects (*addād*).

authority over, and impresses existentionation upon fixed entities; Who holds authority over existent things; Who lets some things precede and Who delays some things else, both as He wills, as He judges, and as He decides justly; Who bestows, and confers a benefit upon ones.

88. *Al-Muta'ālī*—The Most High, over all those who want to be arrogant (‘*uluww*) on earth, claiming a right that they are not entitled to.¹⁰²

89. *Al-Muqsiṭ*—The Equitable, Who bestows according to the rule of equitable apportionment (*ḥukm al-taqsiṭ*), as He says, “and We only send down thereof in a measure known (to Us) (*qadar ma lūm*).”¹⁰³

90. *Al-Jāmi'*—The Uniter, Who exists over all existents that are in the interior condition of His Being (*bi-wujūdi-Hi li-kulli mawjūd fī-Hi*).

91. *Al-Ghanī*—The Independent, the All-Sufficient from the universe-in-itself.¹⁰⁴

92. *Al-Mughnī*—The Enricher, Who confers the attribute of richness (*ghinā*) to some servants. Such is the setup, as His knowledge of the universe follows what is known (*anna 'ilma-Hu bi al-'ālam tābi' li al-ma lūm*) in His Knowledge. As He does not give anything to the universe from Himself or His Essence, He, as He is in Himself, does not need its effect, as He does not bring the universe into existence in the interior condition of His Being (*fī-Hi*) except upon what the universe is.

93. *Al-Badī'*—The Originator of His creation, all the time (*lam yazal*), as He perpetually (‘*alā al-dawām*) creates similars (*al-amthāl*) and dissimilars (*ghayr al-amthāl*). As there must be an aspect whereby a similar is distinguished

¹⁰² The tr. ‘the Most High’ is *Lexicon*, 2: 2148, after the explanation of *Tāj al-'Arūs*. This term is in Q. *al-Ra'd*, 13: 9

¹⁰³ *Al-Hijr*, 15: 21.

¹⁰⁴ For *al-Ghaniyy* in Q. see *Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 97, 181, *al-'Ankabūt*, 29: 6, *Luqmān*, 31: 26, *Fāṭir*, 35: 15, *Muḥammad*, 47: 38, *al-Mumtaḥanah*, 60: 6.

from another thing similar to it, He is *al-Badī'* with respect to this: the Originator of the creation, in accordance with His Own Will, not after the similitude of anything else.¹⁰⁵

94-95. *Al-Dārr al-Nāfi'*—He is the One Who harms, Who gives disadvantage i.e. what is not in harmony with the dispositions (*al-aghrāḍ*) of His creatures; He is the One Who Benefits, Who gives advantage i.e. what is in harmony with the dispositions (*al-aghrāḍ*) of His creatures, respectively.

96. *Al-Nūr*—The Light that manifests the essences of the universe (*a'yān al-'ālam*), the Light that removes the darkness (i.e. the relating) of acts to the universe.¹⁰⁶

97. *Al-Hādī'*—The Guide, Who explains to His knowers what is the reality as it-is-in-itself (*mā huwa al-amr 'alayh fī nafsi-hi*).

98. *Al-Māni'*—The Guardian, Who can release (*irsāl*) what He withholds, while He does not withhold anything except according to His wisdom, according to the requirement of His knowledge of creation.

99. *Al-Bāqī'*—The Everlasting, Whose existence has no end (*al-zawāl*), contrary to the essences of existent things (*a'yān al-mawjūdāt*), whose existence ends just the moment after they had received it. The perpetuity (*dawām*) of existence (*al-wujūd*) and existention (*al-ījād*) belongs to Him.

100. *Al-Wārith*—The Inheritor of what we left behind, particularly after our death, when we move to the intermediary world.¹⁰⁷

101. *Al-Rashīd*—The Director of His servants. He informs them that He—the Exalted—is on a straight path

¹⁰⁵ Apparently, this is also how al-Zabīdī's *Tāj al-'Arūs* has understood *al-Badī'*. See *Lexicon*, 1: 167.

¹⁰⁶ For Ibn al-'Arabi's understanding of *al-Nūr*, see also *Mu'jam*, 1080ff. It occurs in the Q. *al-Nūr*, 24: 35.

¹⁰⁷ For more Ibn al-'Arabi's understanding of *al-Wārith*, see *Mu'jam*, 1191ff. The Name occurs in Q. *Āli 'Imrān*, 3: 180 and *al-Ḥādīd*, 57: 10.

(*ṣirāṭ mustaqīm*) while grasping the forelock of every moving creature;¹⁰⁸ there is nothing save those who *are* on this Path. The straightness refers to their ultimate coming (*ma'āl*) to the Divine Mercy. Allāh has never graced His servant a greater kindness than the fact that He is grasping the forelock of every moving creature. There are none except those who are walking with Him on the straight path (*al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*).

102. *Al-Ṣabūr*—The Forbearing, of the annoyance that is harassed to Him, as He says, 'Those who annoy Allāh and His Messenger.'¹⁰⁹ Although He has the power (*al-iqtidār*) to punish them, He does not hasten to do so. He delays the punishment so that we might remove the annoyance harassed to Him by inflicting retribution (*al-intiqām*) upon them, and He praises us for this. We know that He is attributed with being Patient so that we might fight the annoyer and remove the annoyance from Him.

Conclusion

In summary, Ibn al-'Arabī identifies the Names of Allāh as relations (*nisab wa idāfāt*);¹¹⁰ the Names exist due to their relations to the Absolute Existence,¹¹¹ as the Essence (*Dhāt*) qualifies Itself by them.¹¹² It can be discerned in the Shaykh's concise explanation of some of the Names above, that these Names seek realities and objects. The Names are 'the First Keys, none knows them except He'. They are the Keys of the Divine Realities that relate Him with His creation. For example, the Name Powerful (*al-Qādir*) seeks the reality of giving existence (*ḥaqīqat al-ījād*), the Name

¹⁰⁸ Q. *Hūd*, 11: 56.

¹⁰⁹ Q. *Al-Aḥzāb*, 33: 57. Linguistically, *adha'* (annoy) may equally mean to vex, to cause hurt or injury, to insult, to ill-treat by slander or unseemly conduct, towards those who are entitled to the respect. See Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi, *Tafsir-ul-Qur'an*, 4 vols. (Islamabad: Islamic Book Foundation, n.d.), 1075n3758.

¹¹⁰ Ibn al-'Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1: 42, 163-4, 322-3; 3: 325, 441, 447; 4: 294.

¹¹¹ Al-Attas, *Commentary*, 307, note 410.

¹¹² Al-Attas, *Commentary*, 37, 39-40, 393.

Mohd Sani, "Divine Names as the Standard of Ethics: A Translation of Ibn al-
‘Arabi’s Concise Explanation of *al-Asma’ al-Husna*," *Afkar* Vol. 25 No. 2
(2023): 35-66

All-Knowing (*al-‘Ālim*) seeks the reality of making decision (*ḥaqīqat al-aḥkām*), the Name Willing (*al-Murīd*) seeks the reality of particularizing (*al-ikhtiṣāṣ*), and so on so forth.¹¹³

From another point of view, we can also say that effects (*āthār*) seek the Names that are Relations.¹¹⁴ There is nothing among the created things, with all their diversity, that is not supported by a divine reality and relation.¹¹⁵ So, now, once Allāh has created the universe, we see that it possesses diverse levels (*marātib*) and realities (*ḥaqā’iq*). Each of these demands a specific relation with the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*), which is the Absolute Existence. It is because there are relations between Him and the diverse levels and realities of the universe, that among the messages He sends His messengers with, is concerning His Names¹¹⁶ and Attributes.

References

- ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf b. ‘Alī al-Fanṣūrī al-Jāwī (Tr.). *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī*. Mecca: al-Maṭba‘ah al-Amīriyyah, 1951.
- ‘Abdullāh Yūsuf ‘Alī. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’ān*. New ed. with rev. trans. and commentary. Maryland: Amana, 1992.
- Al-Attas. Syed Muhammad Naquib. *A Commentary on the Ḥujjat al-Ṣiddīq of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī*. Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, 1986.

¹¹³ Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1: 100. Also quoted in *Raḥmah*, 3: 73-5, on *Ṭā Hā*, 20: 8.

¹¹⁴ Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 3: 441.

¹¹⁵ Ibn al-‘Arabī *Futūḥāt*, 3: 447. Also quoted in *Raḥmah*, 3: 73-5, on *Ṭā Hā*, 20: 8. Cf. *Self-Disclosure of God*, 184.

¹¹⁶ *Futūḥāt*, 3: 441. Cf. Chittick, *Path of Knowledge*, 35, 117. We mean by Revelation, says al-Attas, "the speech of God concerning Himself, His creation, the relation between them, and the way to salvation communicated to His chosen Prophet and Messenger..." See 'Worldview of Islām,' 31; *Prolegomena*, 6.

Mohd Sani, "Divine Names as the Standard of Ethics: A Translation of Ibn al-'Arabi's Concise Explanation of *al-Asma' al-Husna*," *Afkar* Vol. 25 No. 2 (2023): 35-66

- Al-Attas. Syed Muhammad Naquib. *The Degrees of Existence*. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1994.
- Al-Attas. Syed Muhammad Naquib. *Islām: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*. Kuala Lumpur: 1st impression published by Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM), 1976, 2nd impression by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), 1992.
- Al-Attas. Syed Muhammad Naquib. *On Quiddity and Essence: An Outline of the Basic Structure of Reality in Islamic Metaphysics*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1990.
- Al-Attas. Syed Muhammad Naquib. *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islām: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islām*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995.
- Al-Attas. Syed Muhammad Naquib. "The Wordview of Islām: An Outline." In *Islām and the Challenge of Modernity*, ed. Sharifah Shifa al-Attas. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1996.
- Burrell, David B. & Nazih Daher. *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*. Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1992.
- Chittick, William C. *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1989.
- Daryabadi, Abdul Majid. *Tafsir-ul-Qur'an*. 4 vols. Islamabad: Islamic Book Foundation, n.d.
- Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Maqṣad al-Asnā fī Sharḥ Ma'ānī Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā*, ed. Bassām 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Jābī. Limassol: Al-Jaffān wa al-Jābī, 1987.
- Al-Ghurāb, Maḥmūd Maḥmūd (ed. and presenter). *Al-Fiqh 'inda al-Shaykh al-Akbar Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī*. Damascus: the author himself, 1st impression, 1981, 2nd impression, 1990.

Mohd Sani, "Divine Names as the Standard of Ethics: A Translation of Ibn al-'Arabī's Concise Explanation of *al-Asma' al-Husna*," *Afkar* Vol. 25 No. 2 (2023): 35-66

- Al-Ḥakīm, Su'ād. *Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣūfī: al-Ḥikmah fī Ḥudūd al-Kalimah*. Beirut: Dandarrah li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nashr, 1981.
- Ibn 'Abd al-Salām. *Shajarat al-Ma'ārif wa al-Aḥwāl wa Ṣāliḥ al-Aqwāl wa al-A'māl*, ed. Iyād Khālīd al-Ṭabbā'. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 1991, reprint, 1996.
- Ibn al-'Arabī. *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*. 4 vols. Cairo: n.p., 1911, repr. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.
- Ibn al-'Arabī. *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*. Ed. 'Uthmān Yaḥyā. Cairo: Al-Hay'ah al-Miṣriyyah al-'Āmmah li l-Kitāb, 1972.
- Ibn al-'Arabī. "Al-Jalāl wa al-Jamāl". In *Rasā'il Ibn al-'Arabī*. Hyderabad-Deccan: Dā'iratul Ma'ārifil-Osmania, 1948.
- Ibn al-'Arabī. "Uqlat al-Mustawfidh," ed. H. S. Nyberg. In *Kleinere Schriften des Ibn al-'Arabī*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1919.
- Ibn Fāris, Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad. *Mu'jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, ed. Shihāb al-Dīn Abū 'Amrū. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994.
- Lane, Edward William. *An Arabic English Lexicon*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1863, repr. in 2 vols. by Islamic Texts Society, 1984.
- Moustafa, Ahmed. *The Attributes of Divine Perfection: The Concept of God in Islam*. London: Fe-Noon Ahmed Moustafa (UK) Limited, 2007.
- Al-Rāzī. *Lawāmi' al-Bayyināt Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh Ta'ālā wa al-Ṣifāt*, ed. Ṭāhā 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Sa'd. Cairo: Maktabat al-Kulliyyāt al-Azhariyyah, 1976.
- Shibli Nomani & Syed Suleman Nadvi. *Siratun Nabi*. 7 vols. Karachi: Darul Ishaat, 1999-2003. Vol. 4, Prophethood and Beliefs. Tr. Rafiq Abdur Rehman.
- Stade, Robert Charles. *Ninety-Nine Names of God in Islam: A Translation of the Major Portion of al-Ghazālī's al-Maqṣad al-Asnā*. Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1970.

Mohd Sani, "Divine Names as the Standard of Ethics: A Translation of Ibn al-'Arabi's Concise Explanation of *al-Asma' al-Husna*," *Afkar* Vol. 25 No. 2 (2023): 35-66

Wehr, Hans. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. Ed. J. Milton Cowan. 3rd printing, Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974, repr. Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1980.

Mohd Sani, "Divine Names as the Standard of Ethics: A Translation of Ibn al-'Arabi's Concise Explanation of *al-Asma' al-Husna*," *Afkar* Vol. 25 No. 2 (2023): 35-66