104488 - Is al-‘Adl (Justice) one of the names of Allah?

the question

Is al-‘Adl (Justice) one of the names of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted?.

Detailed answer

Al-‘Adl (justice) is not narrated as one of the names of Allah in the Qur’aan or in any saheeh hadeeth. It was narrated in a famous hadeeth listing the names of Allah, which was narrated by al-Tirmidhi and others. The scholars discussed this hadeeth and regarded it as weak, and said that this list cannot be attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqallaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Fath al-Baari (11/217): Ibn al-‘Arabi said: It may be that these names are added to complete the list mentioned in the hadeeth attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and it may be that it is a composition of some reporters, which seems more likely to me.

Al-San’aani said in Subul al-Salaam (4/108): The scholars are agreed that the list of names of Allah mentioned in the hadeeth was drawn up by some of the reporters.

But the word al-‘adl (justice) is mentioned in the Qur’aan as a description of the words of Allah, such as in the verse (interpretation of the meaning): “And the Word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice” [al-An’aam 6:115].

Therefore the scholars differed as to whether al-‘Adl is one of the names of Allah, may He be exalted, and a number of them did count it as one of His names, as Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmaan al-Sa’di did at the end of his Tafseer where he said, when listing the names of Allah and discussing their meanings: al-Hakam al-‘Adl Who judges between His slaves in this world and in the Hereafter by His justice and fairness. End quote.

Al-Bayhaqi said in al-Asma’ wa’l-Sifaat (1/198): … al-‘Adl, which appears in the report of al-Asaami mentioned above. End quote.

This was the view of a number of scholars, including al-Khattaabi, Ibn Mandah and others.

Another group were of the view that it is not one of the names of Allah, for the reason we have mentioned, which is that it is not listed as a name of Allah in any saheeh text. Among these scholars is Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him), when he listed ninety-nine names of Allah from the Qur’aan and Sunnah in his book al-Qawaa’id al-Muthla, but he did not mention the name al-‘Adl among them. The same was done by al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqallaani and others.

But it is proven that Allah has the attribute of being just, and He is just in all that He does, as it is narrated in al-Bukhaari (3150) and Muslim (1062) from ‘Abd-Allah ibn Mas’ood about the man who objected to the Prophet’s division of the booty, and he (the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) said: “Who will be just if Allah and His Messenger are not just?”

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Justice is one of His attributes, so He is just in what He says and what He does and what He rules.

A similar report was narrated from Mu’aadh (may Allah be pleased with him), that he did not sit in any gathering of dhikr but he would say: “Allah is Just and Fair, and those who have doubt are doomed.” Narrated by Abu Dawood (4611). It is mawqoof and was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

It says in ‘Awn al-Ma’bood: i.e., just judge.

And Allah knows best.