

503221 - What is the ruling on believing that the divine attributes could benefit or harm?

the question

What is the ruling on believing that the divine attributes – such as the Quran or other divine attributes – could benefit or harm?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Divine attributes that are isolated [in a person's mind] from the divine Essence can neither bring benefit nor cause harm. Whoever believes that they can bring benefit or cause harm in and of themselves has gone against Islamic teachings and reason.

We have previously explained that in the case of a divine attribute that is isolated [in a person's mind] from the divine Essence, we cannot call upon that attribute on its own, or seek refuge with it. Calling upon the attribute in isolation [of the divine Essence] constitutes shirk, according to the consensus of the Muslims.

Secondly:

The attributes of Allah, may He be exalted, are part of His Essence and cannot be separated from it. Hence the one who seeks refuge in the might of Allah, may He be exalted, or in His words has sought refuge with Allah, Who possesses the attributes of might and speech. So there is a difference between calling upon the attribute and calling upon Allah by virtue of the attribute, and between seeking refuge with the attribute and seeking refuge with the One Who possesses this attribute.

If someone says: However, since the Quran benefits the one who reads it and will intercede for its companions, this is true and is proven in the religious texts. But that is not because the attribute can bring benefit by itself; rather it is because Allah, may He be exalted, has put benefit

and blessing in His words. Therefore the one who reads His words will be rewarded, and the one who seeks healing from them will be healed, and so on, and that has been proven, such as the fact that the Quran will come on the Day of Resurrection to intercede for its companions.

So the Quran may bring benefit in two ways: because it is the word of Allah, and the benefit comes from Allah, Who uttered it; or because the Quran is a means which Allah has made to be beneficial, so the benefit in its entirety is from Him, may He be blessed and exalted.

The Quran is the word of Allah and is not created. In other words, Allah, may He be exalted, uttered it, so it is one of His attributes. But people may assume things that are not possible, and think that the words are something separate that Allah did not say. In that case, whoever believes that the words on their own may bring benefit or cause harm by themselves has disbelieved. He has said something that is impossible, because the attribute can only exist in the one to whom it is ascribed. There is no such thing as words that exist by themselves; rather they are the words of Allah or the words of Zayd or 'Amr. There is no such thing as knowledge that stands by itself or mercy that stands by itself; rather the attributes exist in the one to whom they are ascribed.

Shaykh 'Abd ar-Rahman al-Barrak (may Allah preserve him) said: Calling upon the attribute is not mentioned in the supplications that are narrated in the religious texts, and that cannot be something that is prescribed or permissible, because calling upon the attribute – such as saying “O mercy of Allah, O might of Allah, O power of Allah” – implies that the attribute is something separate and independent of Allah, and that it can hear and respond. Whoever believes that is a disbeliever. Rather the attributes of Allah exist in Him, and none of them is a god that can be called upon. In fact, Allah with His attributes, is one God, and He is the one to be called upon and the one in Whom we should put our trust; He is the only one to be worshipped, and there is no god worthy of worship except Him. And Allah knows best. End quote.

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