20476 - Al-Khaafid

the question

Can you give me an explanation of the beautiful name of Allah Al Khafid ?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Before discussing the meaning of this name, we should understand some important issues that have to do with the names of Allaah.

Firstly: The names and attributes of Allaah should be based on evidence from the Book of Allaah (the Qur'aan) and the Sunnah of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him); there is no other source for knowing the names and attributes of Allaah apart from these two sources.

Based on this, whatever names of Allaah are affirmed in the Qur'aan and Sunnah are what we must accept and affirm.

Whatever is denied in the Qur'aan and Sunnah, we must also deny, whilst affirming its opposite.

What is neither affirmed nor denied in the Qur'aan and Sunnah, we must refrain from uttering it and neither affirm it nor deny it, because it has not been narrated in the sense of either affirming or denying.

With regard to the meaning of the name al-Khaafid, it should be noted that if what is meant by it is something that is befitting to Allaah, then it is acceptable, and if what is meant is something that is not befitting to Allaah, then we must reject it.

From al-Qawaa'id al-Mathla fi Sifaat Allaah wa Asmaa'ihi il-Husna by Ibn 'Uthaymeen.

Secondly: An action is broader in meaning than a name. Hence Allaah has attributed to Himself actions for which He is not called by the active participle of the verb in question, such as wanting

(araada), willing (shaa'a) and causing to happen (ahdatha); He is not called al-mureed (the wanter or seeker) or al-shaa'i (the willer) or al-muhdith (the causer). Similarly He did not call Himself al-saani' (the maker), al-faa'il (the doer), or al-mutqin (the one who does things perfectly), or other names derived from actions that He attributes to Himself. The scope of actions is broader than the scope of words.

Those who derive a name for Allaah from every action made a serious mistake and made the number of His names reach more than one thousand. They called Him al-maakir (the plotter), al-mukhaadi' (the deceiver), al-faatin (the causer of tribulation), al-kaa'id (the schemer), etc.

Similarly He has told us about Himself in words that are broader in scope and are not names by which He has called Himself. We may refer to Him as shay' (a thing), mawjood (one who exists), madhkoor (one who is mentioned or remembered), ma'loom (one who is known), muraad (one who is sought), and so on, but He is not to be named in these terms.

The word al-Waajid (the one who is independent of means) is not mentioned as a name of Allaah except in the hadeeth which lists the beautiful names (of Allaah). But the correct view is that this is not the Prophet's words, although the meaning is sound. For Allaah is indeed the One Who has the means (dhu'l-wajd) and is independent of all others, so it would be more apt to call Him al-Waajid than al-Mawjood (the one who exists) or al-Moojid (the initiator). The word al-mawjood (one who exists) may refer to something that is perfect or imperfect, good or evil (so the thing referred to by this name may be perfect or imperfect). If a name may refer to either of these, then it cannot be a name of Allaah, so we cannot call Him al-Shay' (the thing) or al-Ma'loom (the one who is known). Hence Allaah is not called al-Mureed (the seeker) or al-Mutakallim (the speaker) or al-Moojid (the initiator). He has called Himself by names that carry the most perfect meanings in that regard viz. al-Khaaliq (the Creator), al-Baari' (the Creator), and al-Musawwir (the Shaper). Al-Moojid (the initiator) is like al-Muhdith (the one who causes things to happen), al-Faa'il (the doer) and al-Saani' (the maker). This is a very subtle and deep understanding of the beautiful names of Allaah, so give some thought to it. And Allaah is the Source of strength,

From Madaarij al-Saalikeen by Ibn al-Qayyim, 3/383-385

Thirdly: The names that are given to Allaah must be taken from the sound texts; this is not a matter that is subject to ijtihaad or individual reasoning. But what is said in the context of speaking about Him is not subject to the same restrictions, so for example it may be said that He is al-qadeem (the Ancient), al-shay' (the thing [i.e., as opposed to nothing]), al-mawjood (the one who exists), al-qaa'im bi nafsihi (the self sufficient). This is the bottom line with regard to the issue of whether His names are tawqeefi (i.e., not subject to ijtihaad) or it is permissible to call Him by some names that are not reported in the texts.

From Badaa'i' al-Fawaa'id by Ibn al-Qayyim, 1/162

Fourthly: Among the names of Allaah there are some which cannot be used in isolation unless their opposite is also mentioned; if such a name is used on its own, it may give an impression of imperfection – exalted be Allaah far above that. These names include al-Mu'ti, al-Maani' (the Giver, the Withholder); al-Daarr, al-Naafi' (the One who harms, the One Who benefits); al-Qaabid, al-Baasit (the Constrictor, the Expander); al-Mu'izz, al-Mudhill (the Honourer, the Humiliator); al-Khaafid al-Raafi' (the Abaser, the Exalter). Allaah cannot be called al-Maani' (the Withholder), al-Daarr (the One who harms), al-Qaabid (the Constrictor), al-Mudhill (the Humiliator) and al-Khaafid (the Abaser) using these names on their own; rather they must be accompanied by their opposites, because they only appear as such (in pairs) in the Revelation.

From Ma'aarij al-Qubool by al-Hakami, 1/64.

Once the following is understood, the name al-Khaafid is only narrated in the hadeeth which lists the beautiful names of Allaah. The correct view is that this is not the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), as stated above in the words of Ibn al-Qayyim. This is what has been confirmed by more than one scholar such as Imam Ibn Taymiyah (as stated in al-Fataawa, 6/379-380, 8/96, 22/482); al-Haafiz ibn Katheer in his Tafseer (3/515); al-Haafiz ibn Hajar in al-Fath (11/221) and al-Buloogh (1395), and others.

But the meaning of this name is correct, so long as it is accompanied by the name al-Raafi' (the Exalter). It was proven in Saheeh Muslim (179) from the hadeeth of Abu Moosa al-Ash'ari that the

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Allaah does not sleep and it is not befitting that He should sleep. He lowers justice and raises it. The deeds of the night are taken up to Him before the deeds of the day, and the deeds of the day before the night…” There are also some reports from the salaf concerning that, and the mu’allaq report which al-Bukhaari narrated in his Saheeh (al-Fath, 8/487) from Abu’l-Darda’, which says that he said concerning the verse “Every day He is (engaged) in some affair (such as giving honour or disgrace to some, life or death to some)” [al-Rahmaan 55:29 – interpretation of the meaning]: “He forgives sins, relieves distress, raises some people in status and humiliates others.” This was also narrated in a marfoo’ report (i.e., attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)).

Once this is understood, the scholars have also discussed the meaning of the name al-Khaafid, such as the following:

1 – al-Khattaabi said in Sha’n al-Du’a’(58):

Al-Khaafid, al-Raafi’ (the Abaser, the Exalter): similarly when it comes to these two names, it is better to mention them together. Al-Khaafid is the one who brings down tyrants and humiliates the arrogant Pharaohs, and al-Raafi’ is the one who raises His close friends (awliya’) in status through their acts of obedience; He raises them in status, supports them against their enemies and grants them the ultimate victory. No one can prevail except the one whom Allaah raises and no one can be lowered except the one whom He humiliates.

2 – al-Haleemi said, according to al-Asma’ wa’l-Sifaat by al-Bayhaqi (1/193):

The name al-Khaafid should not be used on its own in du’aa’ without the name al-Raafi’. Al-Khaafid is the one who puts people in a lower position, and al-Raafi’ is the one who puts them in a higher position.

3 – Qiwaam al-Sunnah al-Asbahaani said in al-Hujjah fi Bayaan al-Mahajjah (1/140):

Among His names are al-Khaafid, al-Raafi’ (the Abaser, the Exalter). It was said that al-Khaafid is the one who brings down tyrants and humiliates the arrogant Pharaohs, and al-Raafi’ is the one

who raises His close friends (awliya') in status and supports them against their enemies. He humiliates whomsoever He will among His slaves, lowering him in status and making him unknown and insignificant. And He elevates whomsoever He will among His slaves, raising him in status and position. No one can rise except those whom He raises in status and no one can be humiliated except those whom He lowers in status. And it was said that He raises justice and lowers it.

Then he narrated the hadeeth of Abu Moosa that was narrated by Muslim (293): "Allaah does not sleep and it is not befitting that He should sleep. He lowers justice and raises it. The deeds of the night are taken up to Him before the deeds of the day, and the deeds of the day before the night…"

Then he said: The scholars said: what is meant by "He lowers justice and raises it" is: He lowers justice by causing oppressors to prevail, and He raises justice by causing justice to prevail. He lowers justice by means of the unjust and he raises justice by means of just leaders. By alternately lowering and raising the level of justice He tests His slaves to see how they will be patient in the face of adversity and thankful for times of ease.

4 – Shaykh Ibn Sa'di said in al-Haqq al-Waadih al-Mubeen (258):

He is al-Raafi' for people who are righteous and knowledgeable and have faith, and He is al-Khaafid for His enemies.

It says in Tawdeeh al-Kaafiyah al-Shaafiyah (390): Know that the divine attributes that have to do with deeds are all connected to or based on these three attributes: absolute power, ever-executed will and perfect wisdom. All of these are attributes of Allaah. The effects of these attributes prevail everywhere in the universe, giving precedence to some and putting others behind, benefiting some and harming others, giving to some and withholding from others, abasing some and exalting others. There is no difference in this between physical and moral, religious or worldly.

Shaykh Muhammad Khaleel Harraas said in Sharh al-Qaseedah al-Nooniyyah, 2/114:

Allaah is al-Khaafid, al-Raafi' (the Abaser the Exalter). He abases the kuffaar by making their lives

miserable and keeping them away from Him, and He raises His close friends by drawing them close to Him and making them happy. He alternates things amongst His slaves, so He humiliates some people and makes them insignificant and takes away their pride, and He raises others by causing them to inherit the authority and land of the former.

All of these words are true, and they are included in the meaning of al-Khaafid, al-Raafi' (the Abaser, the Exalter).

And Allaah knows best.