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Deriving the Attributes of Allaah

Based on the works of Shaykh Saalih al Fawzaan (حفظه الله)

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

QUESTION: From where and how do Muslims derive the Attributes of Allaah?

ANSWER:

Muslims derive all their information about Allaah from two sources: the Qur'aan and the Sunnah (authentic statements of Muhammad - peace be upon him). Islam prohibits intellect and logic from entering into this aspect of belief.

But a person may well ask:

'It is obvious to see where the Names of Allaah, such as Ar Rahman, Ar Rafeeq, Al Lateef and others, occur in the Qur'aan and hadeeths. These Names are clearly stated at various locations in the Qur'aan and the hadeeths and can be easily found.

But how about the attributes, such as Allaah's Honour, Allaah's Descending, Allaah's Striking, etc – how can one avoid using his own intellect to know what is an Attribute and what is not an Attribute?"

The answer is: Attributes are established for Allaah from the Qur'aan and the Sunnah in one of three ways:

- 1) The Attribute is clearly mentioned – such as when Allaah in the Qur'aan mentions His Strength, or His Face.
- 2) The Attribute is derived from one of His Names – such as the Attribute of Forgiveness which is derived from Allaah's Name al Ghafoor (the Oft Forgiving)
- 3) The Attribute is directly understood from an Action or Description that occurs in the Qur'aan or the Sunnah - such as the Attribute of Retribution for the acts of the Criminals – this Attribute can be derived from the following verse:

Indeed We will get retribution from the criminals.

[Soorah as Sajdah (the 32nd chapter) aayah 22]

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So it can be seen that there is a specified method which the scholars right from the earliest times have used when teaching about Allaah's Names and Attributes.

This once again highlights the fact that Islam has a well developed fixed methodology for deriving the core Islamic beliefs; this is not an area where everyone and anyone can have their own say according to their own opinion.

Rather everyone's statement about Allaah is rejected unless it comes with a specific proof from the Qur'aan or from the authentic hadeeths.