

## **246242 - How can I act in accordance with the meanings of these names of Allah: al-Ahad, al-A'laa, al-Akram and al-Awwal?**

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### **the question**

How do i act upon these names of allah and apply in my life: [al ahad] [al alaa] [al akram] [al awwal]

### **Detailed answer**

al-Ahad, al-A'laa, al-Akram and al-Awwal are among the beautiful names of Allah.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)): ‘He is Allah, (the) One [al-Ahad]’”

[al-Ikhlaas 112:1]

“Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High [al-A'laa]”

[al-A'laa 87:1]

“Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous [al-Akram]”

[al-'Alaq 96:3]

“He is the First [al-Awwal] (nothing is before Him) and the Last (nothing is after Him), the Most High (nothing is above Him) and the Most Near (nothing is nearer than Him). And He is the All-Knower of every thing”

[al-Hadeed 57:3].

Al-Ahad (the One) is the One who is unique, Who is consistently one, and there is no other with Him. He is One and unique in His Oneness, in His Essence, and in His Lordship, in His divinity, and in His names and attributes.

Shaykh as-Sa 'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

(al-Waahid, al-Ahad), the One and only: He is the One Who is unique in all His perfect attributes, in which no one else has any share with Him. People must affirm His Oneness in belief, word and deed, by acknowledging His absolute perfection, affirming that He is unique in His oneness, and devoting all kinds of worship to Him alone.

End quote from Tafseer as-Sa'di (945)

See also the answer to question no. [10282](#)

Acting in accordance with the meaning of this name means acknowledging that Lordship belongs to Allah, may He be exalted, alone, for He alone is the Creator, Sovereign and controller. That is to be followed by not associating anything with him in worship, and by striving for His sake, striving hard to be sincere to Him alone, may He be glorified, in all our words and deeds.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez al-Jaleel (may Allah grant him success) said:

The greatest impact and implication of these two divine names – al-Waahid and al-Ahad – dictates that we must believe that Lordship and divinity belong to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, alone, and we must affirm that He is one and unique in His deeds and attributes, and the deeds of His slaves should be devoted to Him alone. As He is one and unique in His Lordship, in the sense that He is the Creator, the Provider, the Giver of life and death, the Owner Who controls His creation as He wills, so too He is One in His divinity, so there is no god but Him alone, with no partner or associate.

After realising that, a person will be able to affirm his belief in the Oneness of his Lord, may He be glorified, and direct all acts of worship to Him alone – may He be glorified and exalted – as none is deserving of worship except Him alone, may He be glorified.

When this belief is firmly rooted in the heart, it will inevitably show in a person's words and deeds, and in all of his faculties; so he will not bow, or pray, except to Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and he will not put his hopes in anyone, or call upon anyone, or ask of

anyone except Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. He will not seek help or seek protection except from Allah alone; he will not fear anyone except Allah alone; he will not put his trust in anyone except Him alone.

The point is that one of the implications of believing in the divine names al-Waahid and al-Ahad is that one should turn to Allah, may He be glorified, and be devoted to Him alone, and call upon Him, love Him, and venerate Him, revere Him, fear Him, put one's hope in Him, put one's trust in Him, and devote all kinds of worship to Him alone.

This means that one will love Him alone, may He be glorified and exalted, and show loyalty to Him alone. Allah, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Shall I take as a Walee (helper, protector, etc.) any other than Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth?”

[al-An'aam 6:14].

Secondly: hearts will be attached to their Creator, the One Whom they worship, and they will turn to Him alone, with no partner or associate, because He is al-Waahid al-Ahad, to Whom all creatures turn for their needs and necessities. He has power over all things, is the Sovereign of all things, the controller of all things.

These feelings bring relief and comfort to people's hearts, and keep them from feeling scattered and disturbed. They make them feel a sense of contentment in turning to their Lord, the One whom they worship, and lead them to no longer put any hope in those who have no power and are not able to do anything except what Allah enables them to do, for they have no power to benefit or harm themselves, let alone anyone else.

These feelings make a person give up any hope in created beings and make him focus his attention and turn for what he wants to His Creator and Maker, the One Whom he worships, al-Waahid, al-Ahad, as-Samad (the One, the Unique, the Eternal). Thus he finds comfort and peace of mind, because he has focused his attention and turned with all his heart to Allah alone, and he is not turning in many directions, to partners who are at odds with one

another, where he would find himself stuck between them, mired in confusion, worries and bitter conflict.

Allah, may He be exalted, gives us a likeness of the one who worships one God – namely Allah, may He be glorified and exalted – and one who is confused between various gods, who enslave him and tear him apart.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allah puts forth a similitude: a (slave) man belonging to many partners (like those who worship others along with Allah) disputing with one another, and a (slave) man belonging entirely to one master, (like those who worship Allah Alone). Are those two equal in comparison? All the praises and thanks be to Allah! But most of them know not”

[az-Zumar 39:29].

If a person devotes his entire life to achieving this great goal, which is worshipping Allah alone, then everything in his life will be used to achieve that goal; thus he will protect his time and his life from being wasted on anything other than this goal. Therefore he will be very careful with his precious time and numbered breaths, lest they be wasted for no purpose. Rather he will use all his time and the very minutes of his life in that which will bring him benefit in the hereafter, such as doing righteous deeds, calling people to Allah, striving in jihad in His cause; he will regret any minutes of his life that he wastes more than he would regret missing out on everything in this world. Therefore he makes the most of the blessings of free time, good health, wealth and youth, utilising them to obey Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, before they are gone. Even his times of rest, leisure and pleasure he intends as worship of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, so that they may give him energy to do further acts of obedience, after relaxing and re-energising.

End quote from *Wa Lillahi al-Asma' al-Husna* by 'Abd al-'Azeez al-Jaleel (114-117)

Al-A'laa (the Most High) is the One Who is most sublime and exalted in all aspects.

As-Sa'di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Al-'Aliy, al-A'laa (the Exalted, the Most High) is the One Who is most sublime and exalted in all aspects, in Essence, in esteem and attributes, and in terms of prevailing over all others.

He is the One Who rose over the Throne and is the ultimate Sovereign; He is the One who possesses all attributes of greatness, pride, majesty, beauty and all other perfect attributes, and His attributes are the most perfect. End quote.

Tafseer as-Sa'di (p. 946)

For more information, please see an-Nahj al-Asma fi Sharh Asma' Allah al-Husna by Muhammad al-Hammood an-Najdi (1/321-337)

Acting in accordance with the meaning of this name means, first of all, understanding what is meant by the exaltedness of Allah, the Most High, the Most Great. We believe that His Essence is above His Throne, and that He is the Most High in the sense of prevailing over all others. He is the dominant above His slaves, He commands whatever He wills, and He does whatever He wills. He has subjugated all creatures and none can escape His power or control.

To Him belong the highest status and esteem; His is the highest description (i.e. none has the right to be worshipped but He, and there is nothing comparable unto Him) in the heavens and in the earth. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise (30:27), of the highest esteem. No one of His creation is equal to Him and He is not subject to any shortcomings.

Then the individual should express his servitude to Allah in accordance with the implications of this divine name. So he submits to his Lord, and feels his utter need for Him and his weakness before Him, acknowledging that He is deserving of all veneration and reverence, and that nothing is hidden from him on earth or in heaven. So he hastens to worship his Lord and he fears Him night and day, remembering that He is constantly watching him in all that he says and does, and showing a great deal of respect to His commands and prohibitions.

For more information, please see: Wa Lillahi al-Asma' al-Husna by al-Jaleel (259-262).

Al-Akram (the Most Generous) is the One Who is very generous and very kind to His creation.

Al-Khattaabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

He is the most generous of the most generous and no generous one could ever match or equal His generosity. End quote.

Al-Asma' wa's-Sifaat by al-Bayhaqi (1/148)

Abu Hayyaan (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Al-Akram (the Most Generous) is a description that is indicative of emphatic generosity, for His generosity surpasses all generosity; He bestows innumerable blessings, shows forbearance to the sinner, accepts repentance and pardons bad deeds. End quote.

Al-Bahr al-Muheet (10/507)

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

Allah, may He be glorified, is self-sufficient, most generous, almighty, most merciful. He is kind to His slave even though He has no need of him; He wants good for him and relieves him of hardship, not because He wants some benefit from the person or in order to ward off some harm from Himself, but out of mercy and kindness. He, may He be glorified, did not create His creation so as to increase His support, or so as to attain pride, or so that they could give Him strength or benefit Him, or so that they could defend Him.

End quote from Ighaathat al-Lahfaan (1/41)

See also: an-Nahj al-Asma (1/377-392)

Acting in accordance with the meaning of this name means acknowledging the generosity and the bounty of Allah, may He be exalted, and that His stores never run out and there is no limit to His generosity. So the individual should think positively of his Lord and put his trust sincerely in Him. If he sins, he should repent to Him and turn to Him, and not despair

of His mercy, grace and generosity. If he asks of Him, he is certain of a response, and he persists in calling upon Him.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez al-Jaleel (may Allah grant him success) said:

The effects of believing in these two divine names (al-Kareem and al-Akram) include the following:

1. Loving Him, may He be glorified and exalted, for His generosity and blessings that cannot be counted or enumerated; striving to make that love a reality by giving thanks to Him, may He be glorified, in one's heart and in one's words and deeds; worshipping Him alone; not doing anything but that which pleases Allah, may He be glorified, and striving to keep away from that which incurs His wrath; hastening to repent if one falls into anything that is not pleasing to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.
2. Feeling shy and humble before Him, may He be glorified, and observing proper etiquette with Him, may He be glorified and exalted - because, despite the many sins of His slaves, He still does not withhold His gifts and generosity.

This great generosity instils in the heart of the believer humility, humbleness, fear and hope, and it keeps one away from that which incurs the wrath of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted.

3. Being attached to Him alone, may He be glorified; putting one's trust in Him; delegating one's affairs to Him and seeking one's needs from Him alone, may He be glorified, because He is the Most Generous Whose generosity has no end; the Almighty, for Whom nothing is beyond Him on earth or in heaven; the Ever Living Who does not die - unlike created beings who are usually overtaken by covetousness, and even if a person is generous, his generosity is limited and will cease with his death. He may want to show generosity to others, but his inability to afford it prevents him from doing that.

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And put your trust (O Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) in the Ever Living One Who dies not”

[al-Furqaan 25:58]

“And put your trust in the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful”

[ash-Shu‘ara’ 26:217].

This makes hope strong, and makes one aspire for His generosity and mercy, and it makes one lose hope in any created beings.

4. Adopting the characteristic of generosity towards the slaves of Allah, may He be exalted, for Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, is generous and loves those among His slaves who are generous, through whom Allah brings relief to those who are in need, and through whom He grants help to the desperate. The characteristic of generosity that Allah, may He be exalted, loves is not attained by being wasteful and extravagant, and squandering wealth; rather it is a middle path between extravagance and wastefulness on the one hand and stinginess and covetousness on the other.

Imam Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Allah, may He be exalted, praises the people of the middle path, who avoid two deviant extremes (with regard to spending), in more than one place in His Book. He, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And those, who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those (extremes)”

[al-Furqaan 25:67]

“And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty”

[al-Isra’ 17:29]



“And give to the kindred his due and to the Miskeen (poor) and to the wayfarer. But spend not wastefully (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift”

[al-Isra' 17:26].

Therefore denying relatives (kindred), the poor and needy, and wayfarers of their rights is extreme stinginess, and spending wastefully means going to extremes in spending. What Allah likes lies somewhere between the two.

The generosity that is required of people does not stop at generosity in terms of spending wealth only; rather it also includes being generous with one's status (by using it to help others), being generous with knowledge, being generous with oneself, offering it for the sake of Allah.

5. Calling upon Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, a great deal, and seeking one's needs from Him, may He be glorified, no matter how great those needs; and thinking positively of Him, may He be exalted. If there is a delay, or a response to the supplication is withheld, one should not doubt the generosity of Allah, may He be glorified; rather His withholding the need of His believing slave is also generosity and mercy from Him, may He be glorified, for fulfilling the need that the person is beseeching Allah to fulfil may lead to doom in terms of his religious or worldly interests, so by His grace, generosity and mercy, Allah does not answer his prayer, because of what He knows of the harm that would befall him if he were to be granted that.

6. Al-mukram (the honoured) is the one whom Allah, may He be exalted, honours with faith and guidance, even if he is poor and destitute, and the muhaan (the humiliated) is the one whom Allah, may He be exalted, humiliates with disbelief, evildoing and sin, even if he is rich and prominent, with great wealth and many sons. “And whomsoever Allah disgraces, none can honour him” [al-Hajj 22:18].

End quote from Wa Lillahi al-Asma' al-Husna (594-596)

Al-Awwal (the First) is the one before Whom there is nothing

Muslim narrated in his Saheeh (2713) from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to say:

“Allahumma Rabb al-samawaati wa’l-ard wa Rabb al-‘arsh il-‘azeem, Rabbaanaa wa Rabba kulli shay’in, Faaliq al-habb wa’l-nawa wa munzil al-Tawraati wa’l-Injeeli wa’l-Furqaan, a’oodhu bika min sharri kulli shay’in anta aakhidhun bi naasiyatihi. Allahumma anta al-awwal fa laysa qablaka shay’un, wa anta al-aakhir fa laysa ba’daka shay’un, wa anta al-zaahir fa laysa fawqaka shay’un wa anta al-baatin fa laysa doonaka shay’un. Iqdi ‘annaa al-dayna wa aghninaa min al-faqri (O Allah, Lord of the seven heavens and the exalted Throne, our Lord and Lord of all things, splitter of the seed and the date-stone, Revealer of the Tawraat and the Injeel and the Furqaan [Qur’aan], I seek refuge in You from the evil of all things You shall seize by the forelock [have total mastery over]. O Allah, You are the First so there is nothing before You, and You are the Last so there is nothing after You. You are al-Zaahir [the greatest and highest] so there is nothing above You, and You are al-Baatin [aware of the subtlest secrets] so there is nothing closer than You. Settle our debt for us and spare us from poverty).”

Acting in accordance with the meaning of this name means acknowledging His prior grace and mercy. So the individual should think positively of his Lord, and turn to Him in all his affairs, admitting his utter need of his Lord, and the self-sufficiency of his Lord, along with His abundant generosity and bounty. Thus the individual will realise his utter need of Allah and will turn to Him alone in complete devotion. Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Worshipping Allah in accordance with the meaning of the divine name al-Awwal (the First) means not pinning one’s hopes on means and causes, being content with them and focusing on them, rather one should turn one’s focus completely to His generosity and mercy that preceded the existence of means and causes, for He is the One Who showed kindness without any measures on the part of the individual, because the latter had no power to take any measures when he was nothing and did not exist. What measures could

possibly be available at that time, when he was absolutely nothing, and there was over man a period of time, when he was nothing to be mentioned (76:1).

All plans belong to Allah, may He be glorified, and all help comes from Him; His favour precedes all measures, and measures are nothing but part of His bounty and generosity.

Whoever understands the divine name al-Awwal in that sense, this dictates that he should feel a sense of great need for his Lord, and will make him a true slave of Allah.

Worshipping Allah in accordance with the meaning of the divine name al-Aakhir (the Last) also means not putting one's trust in means and measures or being content with them, for they will inevitably and ultimately come to an end, and there will remain the Eternal after that. So putting one's trust in them is like putting one's trust in something that does not exist and will come to an end, whereas putting one's trust in Allah the Last, may He be glorified, is putting one's trust in the Ever Living Who will never die and will never cease to exist. So the one who puts his trust in Him will definitely never lose or be cut off, unlike putting one's trust in anything else, that will have an end after which it will cease to exist.

This is what one should know about Allah, that He was there before all measures and causes, and by the same token, the one who knows Him as al-Aakhir (the Last) will realise that He will remain after all causes and measures cease to exist. Allah existed when nothing else existed, and all things will perish but He.

So think about how these two divine names should shape the behaviour of the individual, and how they dictate that he should be sincere in turning to Allah alone and feel that he is in need of Him, to the exclusion of all else; all things begin with Him and will return to Him, for He is the one who initiated His favour and generosity when there were no causes or measures, and to Him all causes and measures will return. So He is the First and Last of all things.

As He is the Lord of all things, the cause, Creator and maker, He is the God of all things and the ultimate goal, and no one can attain soundness, prosperity or perfection unless Allah alone is his ultimate aim and goal.

He is the First, Who initiated the creation of all beings, and He is the Last, on Whom all servitude, will and love are focused. There is nothing beyond Allah that could be sought, worshipped or loved, just as there was nothing before Him that was created or made.

As He is the only One Who brought you into existence, you should make Him the only One Whom you love and worship, so that your servitude will be valid.

Just as He initiated your existence and your creation started with Him, you should make Him the ultimate focus of your love, will and devotion, so that your devotion to Him on the basis of His names al-Awwal and al-Aakhir will be sound.

Most people worship Him on the basis of His name al-Awwal, but what matters is to worship Him on the basis of His name al-Aakhir. This is the way of servitude of the Messengers and their followers, for He is the Lord of the Worlds, the God of the Messengers, glory and praise be to Him. End quote.

Tareeq al-Hijratayn (p. 19-20)

One of the most important things that we must do with regard to His beautiful names is to ask of Him by virtue of them, and seek to draw close to Him by virtue of them, as He, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them”

[al-A'raaf 7:180].

This is part of perfect servitude to Him, may He be glorified, and shows complete need of Him.

And Allah knows best.