

## **The Image of God in the Qur'an**

Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali and Mahnaz Heydarpoor

The image of God as presented in the Qur'an is one that speaks of Him in personal terms. God has a personal relationship with every individual. In what follows, we will try to present a detailed account of the attributes of God as portrayed in the Qur'an. Efforts have been made to take every name or attribute of God that is mentioned in the Qur'an into account. Muslims believe that both the meaning and the wording of the Qur'an belong to God and that even slight differences in the letters or the frequency of words are significant. Therefore, divine qualities are given different terms and are separately introduced even though they may look similar. Moreover, the number of times each quality is attributed to God is registered. It must be noted that sometimes the same term may have been applied to beings other than God, so every verse is carefully studied to find the exact number of cases in which a given quality is attributed to Him. When it was grammatically impossible to differentiate a case as related to God or to someone else, the Qur'anic commentaries were consulted and the view that seemed more plausible was followed.

Certainly, this survey is subject to all types of human mistakes and limitations and therefore, it is hoped that other researchers will complete it. For example, future research must also take into account those verses in which information about God is given, but not directly as a name or attribute of God. For example, there are many verbs that are used in the Qur'an for God and they constitute a very important source for understanding the image of God in the Qur'an. The other thing that falls beyond the limits of this paper, but will hopefully be dealt with by others, is an elaboration of the concepts attributed to God. For example, when we talk about divine knowledge or divine mercy there are many

more details to be learnt from the Qur'an about their nature and functions.

There are different ways of classifying the divine attributes among Muslim theologians. For example, one way of classification is to divide them into the attributes of beauty (*jamāl*) and glory (*jalāl*). The former includes those attributes that indicate divine perfections in an affirmative way, such as knowledge, mercy and power. These attributes are also called, “*al-ṣifāt al-thubūtiyyah*” (the Affirmative Attributes). The latter includes those attributes that describe God in a negative way, that is, by indicating divine freedom from imperfections and deficiencies. Examples are that God is not a body and has no place, God has no part or partner and He neither begets nor is he begotten. The other way of classifying divine attributes is to divide them into the attributes of essence and action. Attributes of essence (*al-ṣifāt al-dhātiyyah*) are those attributes that describe divine essence and do not depend on any being other than God Himself, such as power and life. Attributes relating to action (*al-ṣifāt al-fi'liyyah*) are those attributes that describe divine acts and, indeed, inform us of a relationship between God and other beings. For example, divine creatorship describes a very specific relationship between God and His creatures. This attribute becomes actual when there is something that is created by God. Another example is forgiveness. There must be someone who is forgiven for us to be able to say that God has forgiven. Of course, to create or to forgive depends on certain essential qualities of God.

In what follows, we will try to avoid sophisticated theological discussions and instead, will just classify divine names and attributes that are mentioned in the Qur'an according to their similarities.

### **Allāh, Ilāh and Rabb**

**Allāh** (الله): This is the main name for God in the Qur'an. Indeed, this is the main name of God in Arabic used by Muslims and non-

Muslims alike. For example, in an Arabic edition of the Bible, the word ‘Allah’ is used for God. In the Qur’an, Allah is mentioned 2816 times (including its variations such as *lillāh*, *tallāh*, *billāh* and *Allāhuma*). There are different views about the origin of this term. The most plausible view seems to be that it is the abbreviated form of *al-ilāh*. In Arabic, *al-* is the definite article and *ilāh* means god. To be more precise, *ilāh* is derived from the root “*a-la-ha*”, which means ‘worship’. Thus, *ilāh* means what is worshipped or worthy of being worshipped, just like *kitāb*, which means what is written or what can be written. The standard formulation of faith in Islam involves the declaration of two facts: *Lā ILāHA ILLALLāH and MUHAMMADUR- RASŪLULLāH* (There is no god but God and Muhammad is His messenger). As indicated in the Qur’an, it is clear that there have always been false gods. So when it is said, ‘There is no god but God’ it is obvious that it means, ‘There is no real god or no one worthy of worship but God’.

**Ilāh (إله):** This is mentioned 120 times. In 37 cases, it is used for false gods. In the rest, it is either used for God specifically or in the general sense. For example, the Qur’an says:

“Were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his children, ‘What will you worship after me?’ They said, ‘We will worship your god (God), and the god (God) of your fathers, Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac, the one god (One God), and to Him do we submit.’” (2:133)

and

“Your god (God) is the one god (One God), there is no god except Him, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.” (2:163)

**Rabb (رب):** In Arabic, the term *rabb* means lord. It is mostly used for God, but it may also be used in a broader sense to be synonymous with master, guardian or owner. In the Qur’an, this

term has been used for God 963 times. This shows the utmost importance of this quality of God. The only word that is used more frequently to denote God in the Qur'an is Allah.

### **Divine Attributes**

**1. Unity:** The Unity of God is one of the most important principles of Islam. Although the Qur'an sometimes speaks about and presents arguments about the existence of God, the main emphasis of the Qur'an is put on the attributes of God, especially His unity and mercy. The Qur'an considers the existence of God to be a very obvious fact, whose acknowledgement requires more straightforward contemplation than complicated philosophical arguments. Even the pagans believed in God, but they were polytheists in the sense that they associated partners with God and worshipped idols. They did not however, deny the existence of God the Creator, and even argued that the idols were a means to reach him, saying, "We do not worship them [idols] except for them taking us closer to God". The idea of the unity of God is asserted in many different ways. Among them, are two attributes that explicitly indicate His oneness:

1.1. **Wahid (واحد):** Literally meaning "one". This is applied to God 21 times in the Qur'an, such as in the following verse:

"Your god is the One God, there is no god except Him, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful." (2:163)

1.2. **Ahad (احد):** Literally meaning "one". This is applied to God once, in the verse below. The difference between Ahad and Wahid is that the former is used for something that is one and at the same time indivisible, something that has neither partner nor part.

"Say, 'He is God, the One.'" (112:1)

**2. Knowledge:** One of the common qualities of God among followers of the Abrahamic faiths is knowledge. In Judaism,

Christianity and Islam, God is thought of as the ‘Omniscient’, indicating that He has all the knowledge. There are hundreds of verses in which the Qur’an talks about different aspects of divine knowledge. The reason for this emphasis lies partly in the great impact that belief in such an idea may have on people’s lives. When we remember that the world is created and run by God who knows everything and that whatever we do or believe, or even intend, is known by Him and that He is fully aware of our needs, sufferings, interests, limits and capabilities, our attitude to the world and to our lives becomes totally different. What follows is a detailed look at the occurrences of this quality of the knowledge of God in the Qur’an:

2.1. **‘Alīm (عليم)**: Meaning the All-Knowing or the Omniscient. This attribute is used for God in the Qur’an 153 times. One example is in the following verse of the Qur’an:

“Ah! You are the ones who bear love towards them, while they do not love you, though you believe in all the Books; and when they meet you, they say, ‘We believe’, but when they are alone, they bite their fingertips out of rage at you. Say, ‘Die of your rage!’ Indeed, God is **All-knowing** of what is in the breasts.” (3:119)

2.2. **A‘lam (اعلم)**: Meaning the Best Knower or the Most-Knowing. This attribute of God is mentioned in the Qur’an 48 times. For example, the Qur’an says:

“Your Lord is **the Best Knower** of whoever is in the heavens and the earth. Certainly We gave some prophets an advantage over others, and We gave David the Psalms.” (17:55)

2.3. **Baṣīr (بصير)**: Meaning the All Seeing or the Seer, this is attributed to God 42 times. For example, the Qur’an says:

“Your relatives and your children will not benefit you on the Day of Resurrection: He will separate you [from one another], and God is **the Seer** of what you do.” (60:3)

2.4. **Samī‘** (سميع): Meaning the All Hearing. This quality of God is mentioned 46 times in the Qur’an. One instance is quoted below:

“Say, ‘If I go astray, my going astray is only to my own harm, and if I am rightly guided that is because of what my Lord has revealed to me. Indeed He is **All-hearing**, nearmost.’” (34:50)

2.5. **Khabīr** (خبير): Literally meaning well aware. This attribute is used 45 times in the Qur’an for God:

“So have faith in God and His Apostle and the light which We have sent down, and God is **well aware** of what you do.” (64:8)

2.6. **Laṭīf** (لطيف): Meaning attentive and/or subtle (or knower of subtleties). This is attributed to God seven times in the Qur’an. For example, the Qur’an says:

“Have you not regarded that Allah sends down water from the sky, whereupon the earth turns green? Indeed Allah is **All-attentive [and/or subtle or knower of subtleties]**, all-aware.” (22:63)

2.7. **Raqīb** (راقب): Literally meaning the Watchful. This is used for God 4 times in the Qur’an. One of the four verses in which it is used is quoted here:

“O mankind! Be wary of your Lord who created you from a single soul, and created its mate from it, and, from the two of them, scattered numerous men and women. Be wary of God, in whose Name you adjure

one another, and the wombs. Indeed God is **Watchful** over you.” (4:1)

2.8. **Qā'im** (قائم): Literally meaning standing. This is used once in the Qur'an to denote the watchful quality of God:

“Is He who is **Watchful** over every soul as to what it earns [comparable to the idols]? And yet they ascribe partners to Allah...” (13:33)

2.9. **Allām al-ghuyūb** (علام الغيوب): Literally meaning the Knower of all that is Unseen. This is mentioned 4 times in the Qur'an, such as in the following verse:

“The day God will gather the apostles and say, ‘What was the response to you?’ They will say, ‘We have no knowledge. Indeed You are **Knower of all that is Unseen.**’” (5:109)

2.10. **Ālim al-ghayb wa al-shahādah** (عالم الغيب والشهادة): Literally meaning Knower of the Unseen and the Sensible. This is mentioned 10 times in the Qur'an. One example is:

“That is **the Knower of the Sensible and the Unseen**, the All-mighty, the All-merciful.” (32:6)

2.11. **Ālim al-ghayb** (عالم الغيب): Literally meaning the Knower of the Unseen. This is mentioned 3 times: twice in a general way and once in respect to the heavens and the earth. The following are examples of how the quality is used in various verses:

“**Knower of the Unseen**, He does not disclose His Unseen to anyone, except to an apostle He approves of. Then He dispatches a sentinel before and behind him so that He may ascertain that they have communicated the messages of their Lord, and He comprehends all that is with them, and He keeps count of all things.” (72:26 -28)

and

“Indeed God is **the Knower of the Unseen of the heavens and the earth**. Indeed He knows well what is in the breasts.” (35:38)

2.12. God is not **ghāfil** (غافل), that is, oblivious or unmindful. This idea is mentioned 11 times in the Qur’an, like in the following instance:

“Certainly We created above you the seven tiers and We have **not** been **oblivious** of creation.” (23:17)

2.13. God is not **nasiyy** (نسى), that is, forgetful. This idea is mentioned once in the Qur’an in the following verse:

“We do not descend except by the command of your Lord. To Him belongs whatever is before us and whatever is behind us and whatever is in between that, and your Lord is **not forgetful**.” (19:64)

**3. Mercifulness and compassion:** After the unity of God, the mercy and compassion of God seems to be the most important aspect of the Qur’anic image of Him. There are more attributes in this category than any other category and altogether they are by far the most often repeated characteristics of God in the Qur’an. Every chapter of the Qur’an starts with *بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم* except Chapter 9. However, Chapter 27 contains this phrase twice: once in the beginning and then again in the verse 27:30. In such an extraordinarily important phrase which stands as a symbol for Islam and occurs 114 times in the Qur’an and with which Muslims are highly recommended to begin every act or speech, two attributes in particular are singled out: al-Rahman and al-Rahim. Another interesting case is the first chapter of the Qur’an, the Opening, which has seven verses. Indeed, this chapter is a brief account of Islam, without which no ritual prayer can be performed. The chapter starts with the phrase *بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم* as usual, but then proceeds as follows:

“All praise belongs to God, Lord of all the worlds, the All-compassionate, the All-merciful, Master of the Day of Retribution. You [alone] do we worship, and to You [alone] do we turn for help. Guide us on the straight path, the path of those whom You have blessed, not the path of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor are astray.” (2:2-7)

As we see, in this important chapter four attributes of God are mentioned: the Lord of all the worlds, the All-compassionate, the All-merciful and Master of the Day of Retribution. These four must be very significant and therefore they deserve careful study. In brief, they refer to two acts of God: the first is that He is the one who runs the universe and the second is that He is the one who establishes justice. They also refer to two qualities of God: the All-compassionate and the All-merciful. This indicates that the primary factors and governing principles in the entire creation are divine compassion and mercy. In the following discussion, the different divine names and qualities that indicate God’s mercy will be explained in some detail.

**3.1. Al-Rahmān (الرحمان):** Literally meaning the All-compassionate or the All-merciful. This is the second most famous name of God in Islam. In the Qur’an God tells the Prophet Mohammad:

“Say, ‘Invoke ‘Allah’ or invoke ‘**al-Rahmān.**’ Whichever [of His Names] you may invoke, to Him belong the Best Names.’” (17:110)

This term is mentioned 169 times in the Qur’an.

**3.2. Al-Rahīm (رحيم):** Literally meaning the Compassionate or the Merciful. It is the most repeated attribute of God in the Qur’an. It is mentioned 226 times in the Qur’an. According to some hadiths, Al-Rahman refers to the compassion and mercy of God for all creatures and al-Rahim refers to the special extra compassion and mercy that He has for the believers. Thus, it may

be more accurate to translate al-Rahman into the All-merciful and al-Rahim into the Most merciful

“Then indeed your Lord, to those who commit evil out of ignorance and then repent after that, and reform - indeed, after that, your Lord will surely be All-forgiving, **All-merciful.**” (16:119)

3.3. **Arham al-rāhimīn** (ارحم الراحمين): Literally meaning the most merciful of the merciful ones. This is attributed to God four times in the Qur’an. One of these instances is mentioned below:

“And Job, when he called out to his Lord, ‘Indeed distress has befallen me, and You are **the Most merciful of the merciful.**’” (21:83)

3.4. **Khayr al-rāhimīn** (خير الراحمين): Literally meaning the best of those who are merciful. This has occurred twice in the Qur’an for God, such as in the following verse:

“Say, ‘My Lord, forgive and have mercy, and You are **the Best of those who are merciful.**’” (23:118)

3.5. **Dhu al-rahmah** (ذوالرحمة): Literally meaning the possessor or the dispenser of mercy. This is used for God twice. One of these verses is:

“Your Lord is the All-forgiving **Possessor of mercy.** Were He to take them to task because of what they have committed, He would have surely hastened their punishment. But they have a tryst, [when] they will not find a refuge besides Him.” (18:58)

3.6. **Dhū rahmat-in wāsi‘ah** (ذو رحمة واسعته): Literally meaning the possessor of an embracing mercy or the dispenser of all-embracing mercy, this is used for God once in the Qur’an in the following verse:

“But if they deny you, say, ‘Your Lord is **Possessor of an all-embracing mercy**, but His punishment will not be averted from the guilty lot.’” (6:147)

3.7. **Wadūd (ودود)**: Literally meaning Affectionate. This divine attribute is mentioned twice in the Qur’an. One instance is in the verse below:

“Plead with your Lord for forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently. My Lord is indeed All-merciful, **All-affectionate.**” (11:90)

3.8. **Al-Akram (الاکرم)**: Literally meaning the most generous. This is used for God once in the Qur’an:

“Read, and your Lord is **the Most generous**, who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know.” (96:3-5)

3.9. **Khayr-un thawāb-an (خير ثوابا)**: Literally meaning the best in rewarding. This is used once in the Qur’an:

“There all guardianship belongs to God, the Real. He is **Best in rewarding**, and Best giver of success.” (18:44)

3.10. **Ghaffār (غفار)**: Meaning all-forgiver. This is applied to God five times, like in the following verse:

“...telling [them]: ‘Plead to your Lord for forgiveness. Indeed He is **All-forgiver.**’” (71:10)

3.11. **Ahl al-maghfirah (اهل المغفرة)**: Meaning the one who is worthy or qualified to forgive. This is applied to God once, in the verse below:

“And they will not remember unless God wishes. He is worthy of [your] being wary [of Him] and He is **Worthy to forgive.**” (74:56)

3.12. **Wāsi‘ al-maghfirah** (واسع المغفرة): Meaning expansive in forgiveness. This is attributed to God once in the following verse:

“Those who avoid major sins and indecencies, excepting [minor and occasional] lapses. Indeed your Lord is **Expansive in [His] forgiveness.** He knows you best since [the time] He produced you from the earth, and since you were foetuses in the bellies of your mothers. So do not flaunt your piety: He knows best those who are wary of God.” (53:32)

3.13. **Khayr al-ghāfirīn** (خير الغافرين): Meaning the best of those who forgive. This is used once, in the verse given below:

“Moses chose seventy men from his people for Our trust, and when the earthquake seized them, he said, ‘My Lord, had You wished, You would have destroyed them and me before. Will You destroy us because of what the fools amongst us have done? It is only Your test by which You lead astray whomever You wish and guide whomever You wish. You are our master, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are **the Best of those who forgive.**” (7:155)

3.14. **Karīm** (كريم): Meaning generous. This divine attribute is mentioned twice in the Qur’an. One of these occasions is in the following verse:

“O Man! What has deceived you about your **Generous** Lord, who created you and proportioned you, and gave you an upright nature, and composed you in any form that He wished?” (82:6-8)

3.15. **Ghāfir al-dhanb** (غافر الذنب): Meaning forgiver of sins. This is mentioned once in the Qur'an in the following verse:

“**Forgiver of sins** and Acceptor of repentance, Severe in retribution, [yet] All-bountiful, there is no god except Him, [and] toward Him is the destination.” (40:3)

3.16. **Qābil al-Tawb** (قابل التوب): Meaning acceptor of repentance. This is mentioned once in verse 40:3, mentioned above.

3.17. **Dhi al-ṭawl** (ذی الطول): Meaning the Bountiful. This is mentioned once in verse 40:3 above.

3.18. **Dhu al-jalāl wa al-ikrām** (ذو الجلال و الاکرام): Meaning the one who has majesty and generosity. This is mentioned twice in the Qur'an, once for God Himself and on another occasion, for His face (*wajh*). For example, the Qur'an says:

“Blessed is the Name of your Lord, **Possessor of majesty and generosity!**” (55:78)

Here, a combination of two qualities is presented, generosity and majesty. The former is related to the mercy of god and the second will be explained later.

3.19. **Tawwāb** (تواب): Tawbah literally means return. When it is used for human beings it means repentance. When someone repents it means that he is returning back to God and is trying to restore his relation with God, which was affected and/or harmed as a result of his sins. However, the Qur'an speaks of God's return as well. According to the Qur'an, our repentance is surrounded by two 'returns' from God. As for a sinful person whose relation with God is damaged, it is God Himself who first initiates reconciliation by inviting His servant to return and by making his heart soft. Then after the servant feels really remorseful and repents, God the Almighty embraces him with

mercy and forgives him. This quality is mentioned 11 times in the Qur'an. One of these times is mentioned below:

“...and to the three who were left behind. When the earth became narrow for them with [all] its expanse, and their own souls weighed heavily on them, and they knew that there was no refuge from God except in Him, then He returned toward them so that they might repent. Indeed God is **Oft-returning**, the All-merciful.” (9:118)

3.20. **Dhu al-fadl al-‘azīm** (ذوالفضل العظيم): Meaning the possessor of great grace. This is mentioned in the Qur'an for God 13 times, such as in the following example:

“O you who have faith! If you are wary of God, He shall appoint a criterion for you (to judge between right and wrong), and absolve you of your misdeeds, and forgive you, for God is **Possessor of great grace**.” (8:29)

3.21. **Ra'ūf** (رؤوف): Literally meaning very kind. This is mentioned for God ten times in the Qur'an. One instance is mentioned below:

“It is He who sends down manifest signs to His servant that He may bring you out of darkness into light, and indeed God is **Most kind** and Most merciful to you.” (57:9)

3.22. **Ghafūr** (غفور): Meaning oft-forgiving. This is mentioned 91 times in the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an says:

“When those who have faith in Our signs come to you, say, ‘Peace to you! Your Lord has made mercy incumbent upon Himself: whoever of you commits an evil [deed] out of ignorance and then repents after that

and reforms, then He is indeed **Oft-forgiving**, Most merciful.” (6:54)

3.23. **Halīm (حليم)**: Meaning all-forgiving. This quality of God is mentioned 11 times in the Qur’an. One of the verses that demonstrates this is:

“The seven heavens glorify Him, and the earth [too], and whoever is in them. There is not a thing but celebrates His praise, but you do not understand their glorification. Indeed He is **All-forgiving**, Oft-forgiving.” (17:44)

3.24. **Wahhāb (وهاب)**: Meaning the one who bestows many blessings or the one who is very munificent. This is applied to God three times in the Qur’an, such as in the following verse:

“[They say,] ‘Our Lord! Do not make our hearts swerve after You have guided us, and bestow Your mercy on us. Indeed You are the **All-munificent**.’” (3:8)

3.25. **‘Afuww (عفو)**: Meaning all-pardoning or all-excusing. This is mentioned as a quality of God five times. One example is given below:

“Whether you disclose a good [deed that you do] or hide it, or excuse an evil [deed], God is indeed **All-excusing**, All-powerful.” (4:149)

3.26. **Mujīb (مجيب)**: Meaning responsive. This is mentioned once for God, in the following verse:

“And to Thamud [We sent] Salih, their brother. He said, ‘O my people! Worship God. You have no other god besides Him. He brought you forth from the earth and made it your habitation. So plead with Him for

forgiveness, then turn to Him penitently. My Lord is indeed Nearmost [and] **Responsive.**” (11:61)

3.27. **Dhu maghfirah** (ذومغفرة): Meaning the one who has (the habit of) forgiveness. This is mentioned twice in the Qur’an:

“Nothing is said to you except what has already been said [earlier] to the apostles before you. Indeed your Lord is Forgiving and One who metes out a painful retribution.” (41:43)

3.28. **Hamīd** (حميد): Meaning praised or praiseworthy. This is applied to God 17 times in the Qur’an. The following verse is one example:

“O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of God, and God - He is the All-sufficient, the **All-praiseworthy.**” (35:15)

3.29. **Khayr** (خير): Meaning better, this is applied to God three times in the Qur’an. One instance is mentioned below:

“We have indeed believed in our Lord that He may forgive us our iniquities and the magic you compelled us to perform. Allah is **Better** and More lasting.” (20:73)

3.30. **Barr** (بر): Meaning benign. This is applied to God once:

“...indeed we used to supplicate Him aforesaid. Indeed He is the **All-benign**, the All-merciful.” (52:28)

3.31. **Nūr** (نور): Meaning light. This is used for God once and that is in the well-known verse of the Light which reads as follows:

“God is the **Light** of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp - the

lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star - lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it. Light upon light. God guides to His Light whomever He wishes. God draws parables for mankind, and God has knowledge of all things.” (24:35)

3.32. **Salām (سلام)**: Meaning peace or source of peace. This is mentioned as a divine quality once:

“He is Allah there is no god except Him the Sovereign, the All-holy, the **Source of peace**, the Securer, the All-compeller, the All-magnanimous. Clear is Allah of any partners that they may ascribe [to Him]!” (59:23)

3.33. **Quddūs (قدوس)**: Meaning holy. This is applied to God twice in the Qur’an, like in the following verse:

“Whatever there is in the heavens glorifies Allah and whatever there is in the earth, the Sovereign, the **All-holy**, the All-mighty, the All-wise.” (62:1)

3.34. **Khayr al-wāriṭhīn (خير الوارثين)**: Meaning the best of inheritors. This is mentioned as a divine quality once:

“And Zechariah, when he cried out to his Lord, ‘My Lord! Do not leave me without an heir, and You are the **Best of inheritors**.’” (21:89)

3.35. **Khayr-un ‘uqbā (خير عقبى)**: Literally meaning best in end. This is used once in the Qur’an for God in the sense that He is the Best giver of success. The Qur’an says:

“There, the (only) protection comes from Allah, the True One. He is the Best to reward, and **the Best giver of success**.” (18:44)

**4. Richness:** According to the Qur'an, God is rich and free from any kind of need. Everything else is a creation of God and entirely dependent on him.

4.1. **Ghaniyy (غنى):** Meaning rich. This is used as a divine quality 18 times, such as in the following verse:

“Certainly We gave Luqman wisdom, saying, ‘Give thanks to God; and whoever gives thanks, gives thanks only for his own sake. And whoever is ungrateful, [let him know that] God is indeed **Rich**, All-praiseworthy.’” (31:12)

4.2. **Ṣamad (صمد):** Literally meaning self-sufficient or impregnable. This is attributed to God once, in the following verse:

“Say, ‘He is God, the One. God is **the Self-sufficient**. He neither gave birth, nor was he begotten, nor has He any equal.’” (112:1-3)

**5. Greatness:** According to the Qur'an, God is great in all aspects of perfection. Indeed, His greatness exceeds all measurement and calculation. This is why Muslim thinkers tend not to compare anything with God in greatness, even by saying something like, “God is greater than us or than the universe”. It is because of this that the well-known Islamic invocation and motto, “Allah-u Akbar” is interpreted in hadith as meaning “God is greater than any being described (or characterized)”.

5.1. **Wāsi‘ (واسع):** Literally meaning All-encompassing. This is mentioned as a divine quality eight times in the Qur'an. One example is as follows:

“To God belongs the East and the West: so whichever way you turn, there is the face of God! God is indeed **All-encompassing**, All-knowing.” (2:115)

5.2. ‘**Azīz** (عزيز): Meaning the Almighty. This is mentioned as a divine quality 90 times in the Qur’an. An example is:

“And put your trust in the **Almighty**, the All-merciful.” (26:217)

5.3. ‘**Aliyy** (على): Meaning most high or exalted. This divine quality is mentioned eight times in the Qur’an, such as when Allah says:

“To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and He is the **Exalted**, the Supreme.” (42:4)

5.4. ‘**Azīm** (عظيم): Meaning great or supreme. This divine quality is mentioned six times in the Qur’an. For instance, when Allah says:

“So celebrate the Name of your Lord, the **supreme**.” (56:74 & 96)

5.5. **Kabīr** (كبير): This also denotes the meaning great or supreme. It is mentioned as a divine quality six times in the Qur’an:

“That is because God is the Reality, and whatever they invoke besides Him is nullity, and because God is the All-exalted, the **Great**.” (31:30 & 22:62)

5.6. **Majīd** (مجيد): Meaning All-glorious. This is used twice for God in the Qur’an. For example,

“They said, ‘Are you amazed at God’s dispensation? [That is] God’s mercy and His blessings upon you, members of the household. Indeed He is All-praiseworthy, **the Glorious**.’” (11:73)

5.7. **Muta‘āl** (متعال): Meaning the Exalted. This is used for God once in the following verse of the Holy Qur’an:

“...the Knower of the sensible and the Unseen, the Great, the **Exalted**.” (13:9)

5.8. **A‘lā** (اعلى): Meaning the most high or the Exalted, this is used as a divine quality twice in the Qur’an, such as in the following verse:

“...but seeks only the pleasure of his Lord, the **Most Exalted**.” (92:20)

5.9. **Rafī‘ al-darajāt** (رفيع الدرجات): Meaning raiser of ranks or raised high above ranks. This is mentioned for God once, in the following verse:

“**Raiser of ranks**, Lord of the Throne, He casts the Spirit of His command upon whomever of His servants that He wishes, that he may warn [people] of the Day of Encounter.” (40:15)

5.10. **Dhu al-‘Arsh** (ذوالعرش): Meaning the possessor of the Throne. This is applied to God four times in the Qur’an. An example is:

“Possessor of the Throne, the All-glorious.” (85:15)

5.11. **Dhu al-jalāl** (ذوالجلال): Meaning the one who has majesty. As said above in 3.18, this is mentioned twice in the Qur’an: once for God Himself and another time for His face (*wajh*). For example, the Qur’an says:

“Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the **Possessor of majesty** and generosity!” (55:78)

5.12. **Muhīṭ** (محيط): Meaning encompassing or comprehensive, this is attributed to God eight times in the Qur'an, like in the verse:

“To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth, and Allah is **All-encompassing** (or **comprehends** all things).” (4:126)

5.13. **Mutakabbir** (متكبر): Meaning the Magnanimous, this is used as a divine quality just once in the Holy Qur'an, in the following verse:

“He is God, there is no god except Him, the Sovereign, the All-holy, the All-benign, the Securer, the All-conserver, the Almighty, the All-compeller, the **Magnanimous**. Clear is God of any partners that they may ascribe [to Him]!” (59:23)

5.14. **Dhi al-ma'ārij** (ذى المعارج): Meaning the one who possesses the tools of ascent. This is used for God once in the following verse:

“...from God, **Possessor** of the Ways of Ascent.” (70:3)

**6. Thankfulness:** Normally people think that thankfulness is a virtue for human beings. When granted some help or gift or the like, human beings feel obliged and render their gratitude to the giver. However, the Qur'an tells us that thankfulness is also one of the qualities of God. Although everything that we humans have belongs to God the Almighty, He appreciates even the little good acts that we perform and thanks us. This idea is addressed by considering the following qualities of God.

6.1. **Shākir** (شاکر): Meaning thankful or appreciative. This is mentioned as a divine quality twice. One of these is mentioned below:

“Indeed Safa and Marwah are among God’s sacraments. So whoever makes hajj to the House, or performs the ‘umrah, then there is no sin on him to circuit between them. Should anyone do good of his own accord, then God is indeed **Appreciative**, All-knowing.” (2:158)

6.2. **Shakūr** (شكور): Meaning very thankful or appreciative. This is mentioned as a divine quality four times in the Holy Qur’an. One of these examples is below:

“...that He may pay them their reward in full and enhance them out of His grace. Indeed He is All-forgiving, **Appreciative**.” (35:30)

7. **Power**: One qualities of God that is common among followers of the Abrahamic faiths, is power. In Judaism, Christianity and Islam, God is known as the ‘Omnipotent’, indicating that He has all the power and is capable of doing anything. The Qur’an emphasises this fact by using the following attributes for God:

7.1. **Qadīr** (قدير): Meaning very powerful, this is used in the Qur’an for God 45 times, such as in the following instance:

“Blessed is He in whose hands is all sovereignty, and He is **powerful** over all things.” (67:1)

7.2. **Ashadd-u quwwat-an** (اشد قوة): Meaning more powerful and is mentioned only once:

“As for [the people of] ‘Ad, they acted arrogantly in the earth unduly, and they said, ‘Who is more powerful than us?’ Did they not see that Allah, who created them, is **more powerful** than them?” (41:15)<sup>1</sup>

7.3. **Qāhir** (قاهر): Meaning the dominant or the absolute. This is mentioned as a divine quality of God twice in the Holy Qur’an, as shown in the example below:

“He is the **All-dominant** over His servants, and He sends guards to [protect] you. When death approaches anyone of you, Our messengers take him away and they do not neglect [their duty].” (6:61)

7.4. **Qādir** (قادر): Meaning able or powerful. This is mentioned seven times. One example is:

“Do they not see that God, who created the heavens and the earth and [who] was not exhausted by their creation, is able to revive the dead? Yes, indeed He is **powerful** over all things.” (46:33)

7.5. **Qādirūn** (قادرون): This is the plural form of Qādir and is used for God five times. When God talks about Himself or His acts in the Holy Qur’an, He often uses the plural form to indicate His most high position. This can be compared to the way in which monarchies are often referred to or addressed by using plural form. Some people have suggested that another reason for using the plural form in the Qur’an is that God normally does things through His agents, and therefore His acts are, in a sense, a collective enterprise. Interestingly, unlike popular usage, God is never addressed in the Qur’an and hadiths in a plural form. This is to put utmost emphasis on the unity of God and the fact that it is only Him who can be worshiped. One of the verses in which the quality of being powerful is used for God in the plural form is the following:

“Does man suppose that We shall not put together his bones? Yes indeed, We are **Able** to proportion [even] his fingertips! Rather man desires to go on living viciously.” (75:3-5)

7.6. **Qawiyy** (قوى): This means powerful or strong and is used nine times for God in the Qur’an. One example is:

“God is All-attentive to His servants. He provides for whomever He wishes, and He is the **Strong**, the All-mighty.” (42:19)

7.7. **Hafiz (حفيظ)**: Meaning preserver or protector. This is used for God three times. One of these is in the following verse:

“But if you turn your backs [on me], then [know that] I have communicated to you whatever I was sent to you with. My Lord will make another people succeed you, and you will not hurt God in the least. Indeed my Lord is **Preserver** of [and **Watchful**] over all things.” (11:57)

7.8. **Ghālib-un ‘alā ‘amrih (غالب على امره)**: Meaning master of his affair. This quality is used once in the Qur’an for God. It denotes that God has full command of His affairs and whatever He decides will certainly happen. The Qur’an says:

“The man from Egypt who had bought him [Joseph] said to his wife, ‘Give him an honourable place [in the household]. Maybe he will be useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son.’ Thus We established Joseph in the land that We might teach him the interpretation of dreams. God is **Master of His affairs**, but most people do not know.” (12:21)

7.9. **Hāfizīn (حافظين)**: This is the plural form of Hāfiz, which means the preserver, protector or guardian and is used for God twice. For example, the Qur’an says:

“Indeed We have sent down the Reminder, and We will most surely be its guardian.” (15:9)

7.10. **Qahhār (قهار)**: Meaning very dominant and absolute or paramount. This is used as a divine quality six times in the Qur’an. One example is:

“The day the earth is transformed into another earth and the heavens [as well], and they are presented before God, the One, the **All-dominant**.” (14:48)

7.11. **Khayr-un hāfīzan** (خير حافظا): Meaning the best protector. This is mentioned once in the Qur’an for God, in the following verse:

“He said, ‘Should I trust you with him just as I trusted you with his brother before?’ Yet God is **the Best protector**, and He is the most merciful of merciful ones.” (12:64)

7.12. **Shadid al-mihāl** (شديد المحال): Meaning great in might. This is mentioned as a divine quality once in the Qur’an:

“The Thunder celebrates His praise, and the angels [too], in awe of Him, and He releases the thunderbolts and strikes with them whomever He wishes. Yet they dispute concerning God, though He is **Great in might**.” (13:13)

7.13. **Muqtadir** (مقتدر): Meaning (very) powerful. This is mentioned three times in the Qur’an for God, like in the verse:

“Draw for them the parable of the life of this world: [It is] like the water We send down from the sky. Then the earth’s vegetation mingles with it. Then it becomes chaff, scattered by the wind. And God is **Powerful** over all things.” (18:45)

7.14. **Muqtadirūn** (مقتدرون): This is the plural form of Muqtdadir and is used once in the Qur’an for God:

“We shall show you what We have promised them, for indeed We are the **Possessors of full power** over them.” (43:42)

7.15. **Dhu al-Quwwah** (ذوالقوة): Meaning the possessor of power or the powerful. This is used once in the following verse:

“Indeed it is God who is the All-provider, **Powerful**, All-strong.” (51:58)

7.16. **Matin** (متين): This means strong or firm and is mentioned as a divine quality once:

“Indeed it is Allah who is the All-provider, Powerful, **All-strong**.” (51:58)

7.17. **Muhaymin** (مهيمن): Meaning guardian or conserver. This is mentioned as a divine quality just once:

“He is God, there is no god except Him, the Sovereign, the All-holy, the All-benign, the Securer, **the All-conserver**, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, the All-magnanimous. Clear is God of any partners that they may ascribe [to Him]!” (59:23)

7.18. **Jabbār** (جبار): Meaning all-compeller. This is mentioned as a divine quality just once in the verse 59:23.

7.19. **Muqīt** (مقيت): Meaning powerful and preserver. This is mentioned as a divine quality in the following verse:

“Whoever intercedes for a good cause shall receive a share of it, and whoever intercedes for an evil cause shall share its burden, and Allah is **Powerful** over all things.” (4:85)

7.20. **Ashadd-u ba’s-an** (اشد بأسا): Meaning greater or greatest in power and might. This has been attributed to God once:

“So fight in the way of Allah: you are responsible only for yourself, but urge on the faithful [to fight]. Maybe Allah will curb the might of the faithless, for

Allah is **Greatest in might** and Severest in punishment.” (4:84)

7.21. God does not take as His aid those who mislead. This is mentioned once in the Qur’an:

“I did not make them a witness to the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor to their own creation, nor do I take those who mislead as assistants.” (18:51)

7.22. God is never outrun or outmanoeuvred. This is mentioned twice. One example is:

“We have ordained death among you, and We are not to be outmanoeuvred.” (56:60)

**8. Wisdom:** According to the Qur’an God is the Wise (*hakim*). God never does anything in vain. This attribute of God is mentioned 91 times, such as in the following verse:

“O Moses! Indeed I am Allah, the All-mighty, **the Wise.**” (27:9)

## **9. Ownership**

9.1. **Mālik** (مالك): Meaning owner or master, this is used twice for God in the Holy Qur’an. One of the verses where it is used is:

“**Master** of the Day of Retribution.” (1:4)

9.2. **Malik** (ملك): Meaning king or sovereign, this is used as a divine quality five times in the Qur’an. For example:

“So exalted is Allah, the True **Sovereign**. There is no god except Him, the Lord of the Noble Throne.” (23:116)

9.3. **Malik** (مليك): Meaning king or sovereign, this is used once in the Qur’an as a divine quality:

“...in the abode of truthfulness with a Powerful **King.**” (54:55)

**10. Creatorship:** The idea that God is the creator of the world is mentioned in hundreds of Qur’anic verses. However, in most of the cases instead of names or adjectives, verbs are used. As mentioned in the beginning, here we will just refer to those cases in which a name or adjective that refers to the creative ability of God is used.

10.1. **Badi’ (بديع):** Meaning creator or originator. God is introduced as the creator of the heavens and the earth, twice, like in the following example:

“...the **Originator** of the heavens and the earth; and when He decides on a matter, He just says to it, ‘Be!’ and it is.” (2:117)

10.2. **Faṭīr (فاطر):** Meaning creator or originator. This is mentioned six times:

“The originator of the heavens and the earth, He made for you mates from your own selves, and mates of the cattle, by which means He multiplies you. Nothing is like Him. And He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing.” (42:11)

10.3. **Fāliq al-habb wa al-nawā (فالق الحب و النوى):** Meaning the splitter of the grain and the pit. This is mentioned once for God in the Holy Qur’an:

“Indeed Allah is **the Splitter of the grain and the pit.** He brings forth the living from the dead and He brings forth the dead from the living. That is Allah! Then where do you stray?” (6:95)

10.4. **Fāliq al-iṣbāh (فالق الاصباح):** Meaning the splitter of the dawn. This is used as a divine quality once. The Qur’an says:

“**Splitter of the dawn**, He has made the night for rest, and the sun and the moon for calculation. That is the ordaining of the Almighty, All-knowing.” (6:96)

10.5. **Khāliq** (خالق): Meaning creator. This is mentioned as a divine quality eight times. For example, the Qur’an says:

“That is Allah, your Lord, there is no god except Him, the **Creator** of all things; so worship Him. He watches over all things.” (6:102)

10.6. **Khāliqūn** (خالقون): This is mentioned as a divine quality once in the Qur’an and is the plural form of *khāliq*, which means creator. The Qur’an says:

“Is it you who create it, or are We the **Creators**?” (56:59)

10.7. **Khallāq** (خالق): Meaning the one who creates a lot. This is applied twice for God:

“Indeed your Lord is the **Creator**, the All-knowing.” (15:86)

10.8. **Ahsan al-khāliqīm** (احسن الخالقين): Meaning the best of creators, this is mentioned twice in the Qur’an. One instance is:

“Then We created the drop of fluid as a clinging mass. Then We created the clinging mass as a fleshy tissue. Then We created the fleshy tissue as bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. Then We produced him as [yet] another creature. So blessed is Allah, the **Best** of creators!” (23:14)

10.9. **Muhyi al-mawtā** (محيي الموتى): Meaning reviver of the dead. This is applied twice to God. One example is in the following verse:

“So observe the effects of Allah’s mercy: how He revives the earth after its death! Indeed He is the **Reviver** of the dead, and He has power over all things.” (30:50)

10.10. **Mūsi‘ūn (موسعون)**: Meaning expander. This is used as a divine quality once:

“We have built the sky with might, and indeed it is We who are its **Expanders**.” (51:47)

10.11. **Bāri (بارئ)**: Meaning creator or maker. This is used for God three times. The verse below is one example:

“He is Allah, the Creator, **the Maker**, the Former. To Him belong the Best Names. Whatever there is in the heavens glorifies Him and [whatever there is in] the earth, and He is the Almighty, the Wise.” (59:24)

10.12. **Muṣawwir (مصور)**: Meaning the giver of form or shape. This is mentioned once in the Qur’an in the above verse, (59:24). Again, although the idea that God gives form to human beings is mentioned in several verses through the use of present tense or past tense verbs, here we are concerned only with the names and qualities directly attributed to God.

## 11. Truthfulness

11.1. **Haqq (حق)**: Meaning truth, true or reality. This has been used 11 times in the Qur’an for God. For example, the Qur’an says:

“So exalted is Allah, the **True** Sovereign, There is no god except Him, the Lord of the Noble Throne.” (23:116)

and

“That is because God is the **Truth**, and what they invoke besides Him is nullity, and because God is the All-exalted, the All-great.” (22:62)

11.2. **Aṣḍaq-u hadithan** (صدق حديثا): Meaning more truthful in speech. This is mentioned once:

“Allah - there is no god except Him - will surely gather you on the Day of Resurrection, in which there is no doubt; and who is **more truthful in speech** than Allah?” (4:87)

11.3. **Aṣḍaq-u qil-an** (صدق قيلا): Meaning more truthful in speech. This is mentioned once:

“But those who have faith and do righteous deeds, We will admit them into gardens with streams running in them, to remain in them forever a true promise of Allah, and who is **more truthful in speech** than Allah?” (4:122)

11.4. **Sādiqūn** (صادقون): This is the plural form for **ṣādiq** and means truthful. This is used once in the Qur’an, in the following verse:

“To the Jews We forbade every animal having an undivided hoof, and of oxen and sheep We forbade them their fat, except what is borne by their backs or the entrails or what is attached to the bones. We requited them with that for their rebelliousness, and We are surely **Truthful**.” (6:146)

**12. Nearness:** At the same time as speaking of God as a transcendent and exalted reality, the Qur’an also places great emphasis on the fact that God is very close to us. God is even closer to us than our jugular vein. We should always feel His presence. In the following passages, we refer to some of the qualities of God related to this aspect of His nearness.

12.1. **Qarīb** (قريب): Meaning close or near. This is used for God three times. For example, the Qur'an says:

“When My servants ask you about Me, [tell them that] I am indeed **Near**. I answer the supplicant's call when he calls Me. So let them respond to Me, and let them have faith in Me, so that they may fare rightly.” (2:186)

12.2. **Shahīd** (شاهد): This means witness or present. It is also sometimes used to be synonymous with martyr, because martyrs are thought to be living and present. There are 19 cases, in which the Qur'an emphasises that God is present and witnesses every thing. For example, the Qur'an says:

“...to whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is **Witness** to all things.” (85:9)

12.3. **Shuhūd** (شهود): This is the plural form of *shahid* and means witnesses. This is used for God once in the Holy Qur'an:

“You do not engage in any work, neither do you recite any part of the Qur'an, nor do you perform any deed but We are **Witnesses** over you when you are engaged therein. Not an atom's weight escapes your Lord in the earth or in the sky, nor [is there] anything smaller than that nor bigger, but it is in a manifest Book.” (10:61)

12.4. **Raqīb** (راقب): This means watchful and is used three times in the Qur'an to refer to God. For example, the Qur'an says:

“O mankind! Be wary of your Lord who created you from a single soul, and created its mate from it, and, from the two of them, scattered numerous men and women. Be wary of Allah, in whose Name you adjure one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is **Watchful** over you.” (4:1)

12.5. **Aqrab (أقرب)**: This means nearer and is attributed twice to God:

“Certainly We have created man and We know to what his soul tempts him, and We are **Nearer** to him than his jugular vein.” (50:16)

and

“We are **Nearer** to him than you are, though you do not perceive.” (56:85)

12.6. **Zāhir (ظاهر)**: Literally meaning manifest or apparent, this has been used for God once:

“He is the First and the Last, the **Manifest** and the Hidden, and He has knowledge of all things.” (57:3)

12.7. **Bāṭin (باطن)**: Literally meaning hidden or internal, this has been used for God in verse 57:3, above. It shows that God is present everywhere: in the manifest world and in the hidden world. He is manifest, but not so much so that we could fully grasp Him. He is hidden, but not so much so that He would be absent or remain unknown to us.

12.8. God is not **ghā’ib (غائب)**: This means that God is never absent. In addition to those verses that affirm directly the fact that God is present and witnesses everything, in the following verse the Qur’an denies the absence of God. In this particular verse the plural form, (*ghā’ibin*) is used:

“Then We will surely recount to them with knowledge, for We had not been **absent**.” (7:7)

### 13. Life & eternity

13.1. **Qayyūm (قيوم)**: In Arabic, this term is used for something that is self-subsistent and supports other beings. This is mentioned as a divine quality three times. One example is:

“God, there is no god except Him, is the Living One, **the Sustainer.**” (3:2)

13.2. **Hayy (حي)**: Meaning the living. This is mentioned five times in the Qur’an as a quality of God. For example, the Qur’an says:

“He is **the Living** One, there is no god except Him. So supplicate Him, putting exclusive faith in Him. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.” (40:65)

13.3. **Wārithūn (وارثون)**: This is the plural form of wārith and means inheritors. It means that God remains and lasts forever and is mentioned as a quality for God twice in the Qur’an, such as in the following verse:

“Indeed it is We who give life and bring death and We are the **Inheritors.**” (15:23)

13.4. **Abqā (ابقى)**: Meaning more enduring or more lasting. This is attributed to God once and that is in the following verse:

“We have indeed believed in our Lord that He may forgive us our iniquities and the magic you compelled us to perform. Allah is **Better** and **More lasting.**” (20:73)

13.5. **Awwal (اول)**: Meaning the first. This is mentioned once in the Qur’an as a divine quality. It implies that God is eternal and nothing preceded Him in existence. The Qur’an says:

“He is **the First** and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He has knowledge of all things.” (57:3)

13.6. **Ākhar** (آخر): Meaning the last. This is mentioned as a divine quality once. It implies that God is everlasting. The Qur'an says:

“He is the First and the **Last**, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He has knowledge of all things.” (57:3)

#### 14. Justice

14.1. **Sarī‘ al-hisāb** (سريع الحساب): Meaning swift to reckon. This has been applied to God eight times in the Qur'an. One of the verses is quoted here:

“Today every soul shall be requited for what it has earned. There will be no injustice today. Indeed Allah is **Swift at reckoning**.” (40:17)

14.2. **Sarī‘ al-‘iqāb** (سريع العقاب): Meaning swift in punishment. This is mentioned as a divine quality twice. One of these verses is:

“It is He who has made you successors on the earth, and raised some of you in rank above others so that He may test you in respect to what He has given you. Indeed your Lord is **Swift in punishment**, and indeed He is All-forgiving, All-merciful.” (6:165)

14.3. **Jāmi‘** (جامع): Meaning the gatherer. This is used as a quality for God twice, such as in the following verse:

“Our Lord! You are the **Gatherer** of mankind on a day in which there is no doubt. Indeed Allah does not break His promise.” (3:9)

14.4. **Qā'im-an bi al-qisṭ** (قائما بالقسط): Meaning maintainer of justice. This has been attributed to God once, in the following verse:

“Allah bears witness that there is no god except Him and [so do] the angels and those who possess knowledge **Maintainer of justice**, there is no god but Him, the Almighty, the All-wise.” (3:18)

14.5. **Hasīb** (حسيب): Meaning the reckoner. This is applied to God three times, since God takes account of all things. For example, the Qur’an says:

“When you are greeted with a salute, greet with a better one than it, or return it; indeed Allah is **Reckoner** of all things.” (4:86)

14.6. **Asra‘ al-hāsibīn** (اسرع الحاسبين): Meaning the swiftest of the reckoners. This is once mentioned in the Qur’an as a divine quality:

“Then they are returned to Allah, their real master. Look! All judgement belongs to Him, and He is **the Swiftest of reckoners**.” (6:62)

14.7. **Hāsibīn** (حاسبين): This is the plural form of *hāsib* and means reckoners. It is mentioned once in the Qur’an for God:

“We shall set up the scales of justice on the Day of Resurrection, and no soul will be wronged in the least. Even if it be the weight of a mustard seed We shall produce it and We suffice as **Reckoners**.” (21:47)

14.8. **Khayr al-hākimīn** (خير الحاكمين): Meaning the best of judges. It is mentioned as a divine quality three times in the Qur’an. One of these is below:

“And follow that which is revealed to you, and be patient until Allah issues [His] judgement, and He is the **Best of judges**.” (10:109)

14.9. **Ahkam al-hākimīn** (احكام الحاكمين): Meaning the most just, the fairest of judges or the most capable of judges. It is mentioned as a divine quality twice. For example, the Qur'an says:

“Is not Allah **the Fairest of all judges?**” (95:8)

14.10. **'Aduww-un li al-kāfirīn** (عدو للكافرين): Meaning an enemy of those who reject faith. This has been attributed once to God in the Qur'an in response to those who show enmity to God, His angels or His apostles:

“[Say] ‘Whoever is an enemy of Allah, His angels and His apostles, and Gabriel and Michael, [let him know that] Allah is indeed **the Enemy of those who reject faith.**’” (2:98)

14.11. **Shadīd al-'iqāb** (شديد العقاب): Meaning severe in punishment. This is attributed to God 14 times. For example, the Qur'an says:

“Know that Allah is **Severe in punishment**, and that Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful.” (5:98)

14.12. **Shadīd al-'adhāb** (شديد العذاب): This is similar to the previous quality and is mentioned once:

“Among the people are those who take others (for worship) besides Allah, loving them as if loving Allah but the faithful have a more ardent love for Allah though the wrongdoers will see, when they sight the punishment, that power, altogether, belongs to Allah, and that Allah is **Severe in punishment.**” (2:165)

14.13. **Dhū intiqām** (ذوانتقام): Meaning avenger. This is used for God four times in the Qur'an:

“...and whomever Allah guides, there is no one who can lead him astray. Is not God an Almighty **Avenger?**” (39:37)

14.14. **Ashadd-u tankil-an** (اشد تنكيلا): Meaning severest in punishment. This is mentioned as a divine quality once:

“So fight in the way of Allah: you are responsible only for yourself, but urge on the faithful [to fight]. Maybe Allah will curb the might of the faithless, for Allah is Greatest in might and **Severest in punishment.**” (4:84)

14.15. **Ahaqq-u an takhshawh-u** (احق ان تخشوه): This quality occurs twice in the Qur’an and means that God is worthier of fear. The idea is that the faithful should not be worried about what people may think about them or how they might act with them if they are doing something right. If they are doing something wrong and displeasing God, however, then it is a different matter.

“Will you not make war on a people who broke their pledges and resolved to expel the Apostle, and opened [hostilities] against you initially? Do you fear them? But Allah is **Worthier of being feared by you,** should you be faithful.” (9:13)

14.16. **Ahaqq-u an yurdūh-u** (احق ان يرضوه): This has occurred once in the Qur’an and means that God is worthy of being pleased. It is used in the verse below:

“They swear to you by Allah, to please you; but Allah and His Apostle are **worthier that they should please Him,** should they be faithful.” (9:62)

14.17. **Ahaqq-u an yuttaba’** (احق ان يتبع): This has occurred once in the Qur’an and means that He is the most worthy of being followed:

“Say, ‘Is there anyone among your partners who may guide to the truth?’ Say, ‘Allah guides to the truth. Is he who guides to the truth **worthier to be followed**, or he who guides not unless he is [himself] guided? What is the matter with you? How do you judge?’” (10:35)

14.18. **Mundhirīm** (منذرين): This is the plural form of *mundhir* which means the one who gives warning. This is used for God once:

“Indeed We sent it down on a blessed night, and indeed We have been **Warning** [mankind].” (44:3)

14.19. **Muntaqimūn** (منتقمون): This is a plural form of *muntaqim*, which means avenger. There are three cases in the Qur’an where this has been attributed to God. One of them is the following verse:

“Who is a greater wrongdoer than him who is reminded of his Lord’s signs, whereat he disregards them? Indeed We shall **take vengeance** upon the guilty.” (32:22)

14.20. **Dhū ‘iqāb-in ‘alīm** (ذو عقاب اليم): Meaning the owner of painful punishment. This is used once in the Qur’an:

“Nothing is said to you except what has already been said [earlier] to the apostles before you. Indeed your Lord is Forgiving and **One who owns a painful retribution**.” (41:43)

14.21. **Barī** (برئ من المشركين): This phrase is used once in the Qur’an and means that God is free from any obligation to the polytheists. This is mentioned at the beginning of the Chapter Nine:

“[This is] an announcement from Allah and His Apostle to all the people on the day of the greater Hajj that Allah and His Apostle **are free from obligation to the polytheists**. If you repent that is better for you; but if you turn your backs [on Allah], know that you cannot thwart Allah, and inform the faithless of a painful punishment.” (9:3)

14.22. **Ahl al-taqwā** (اهل التقوى): Meaning the one who deserves that you should be wary of him. This is mentioned for God once:

“And they will not remember unless Allah wishes. He is **Worthy of [your] being wary [of Him]** and He is Worthy to forgive.” (74:56)

14.23. God is not **zallām** (ظلام): This means that God is not in the least bit unjust (to the servants). This is emphasised in five verses, such as the following one:

“That is because of what your hands have sent ahead, and because Allah is not **in the least bit unjust** to the servants.” (8:51)

14.24. God is not **muhlik al-qurā bi zulm-in** (مهلك القرى بظلم): This literally means that God is not an unjust destroyer of the towns. The idea is that God never punishes people without warning them or more than what they deserve. This point is mentioned once in the Qur’an:

“This is because your Lord would **never destroy the towns unjustly** while their people were unaware.” (6:131)

14.25. God is not **zālim** (ظالم): This means that God is not unjust. In addition to those verses that directly affirm the fact that God is the maintainer of justice or the most just of the judges, in the following verse the Qur’an denies the injustice of God. In this particular verse a plural form (*zālimin*) is used:

“...for the sake of admonition, and We **were not unjust.**” (26:209)

**15. Activeness:** The Qur’an criticizes those who think that after creating the world, God has nothing to do with the world and its affairs. Indeed, creation is an ongoing process, which has never stopped. In what follows, we will refer to those attributes of God that indicate His active role in the world in general, and in human life in particular.

15.1. **Waliyy (ولى):** This has different meanings. However, the main meaning especially when it is used for God or for the people who are mentioned along with God, is the guardian, the custodian or the one who is in charge. This has been used in the Qur’an 12 times for God. For example, the Qur’an says:

“Have they taken guardians besides Him? [Say,] ‘It is Allah who is the **Guardian**, and He revives the dead, and He has power over all things.’” (42:9)

and

“Your **guardian** is only God, His Apostle, and the faithful who maintain the prayer and give the zakat while bowing down.” (5:55)<sup>2</sup>

15.2. **Awlā (ولى):** Meaning the one who has more authority or right for (doing) something than others. This is mentioned once in the Qur’an for God:

“O you who have faith! Be maintainers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah, even if it should be against yourselves or [your] parents and near relatives, and whether it be [someone] rich or poor, for Allah is a **Better protector of** them [or has a greater right over them]. So do not follow [your] desires, lest you should be unfair, and if you distort

[the testimony] or disregard [it], Allah is indeed well aware of what you do.” (4:135)

15.3. **Mawlā (مولى)**: Again this has different meanings. However, the main meaning, especially when it is used for God, is master or guardian. This has been used in the Qur’an 12 times for God. For example, the Qur’an says:

“And if they turn away, then know that Allah is your **Master**: an excellent Master and an excellent Helper!” (6:40)

15.4. **Khayr al-nāṣirīn (خيرالناصرين)**: Meaning best of helpers. This is used as a divine quality once in the Qur’an, in the following verse:

“Rather Allah is your Master, and He is **the Best of helpers**.” (3:150)

15.5. **Wakīl (وكيل)**: Meaning protector or guardian. This is mentioned as a divine quality 13 times in the Qur’an. One of these cases is:

“And put your trust in Allah; Allah suffices as **Protector**.” (33:3)

15.6. **Naṣīr (نصير)**: Meaning helper. This is used as divine quality 4 times in the Qur’an. One example is:

“But Allah knows your enemies better, and Allah suffices as guardian, and Allah suffices as **Helper**.” (4:45)<sup>3</sup>

15.7. **Khayr al-fātihīn (خير الفاتحين)**: Literally meaning the best of those who open or decide or judge. This is mentioned once in the Qur’an in the following verse:

“We would be fabricating a lie against Allah should we revert to your creed after Allah had delivered us from it. It does not behove us to return to it, unless Allah, our Lord should wish so. Our Lord embraces all things in [His] knowledge. In Allah we have put our trust. Our Lord! Decide between us and our people, and You are **the Best of deciders!**” (7:89)

In this verse, the believers ask God to decide or judge between them and those who reject faith. This may refer to the final judgement on the Day of Judgement. However, it is likely that it refers to a judgement or decision to be made by God in this world, to support and bring victory to the party of truth. Accordingly, this verse shows the active role that God plays in supporting the people of truth and good will.

15.8. **Mūhin-u kayd al-kāfirīn** (موهن كيد الكافرين): Meaning One who makes the plans of the faithless weak or feeble. This is mentioned as a divine quality once in the Qur’an:

“Such is the case, and [know] that Allah is the **One who makes weak the stratagems of the faithless.**” (8:18)

15.9. **Khayr al-mākirīn** (خير الماكيرين): Meaning the best of planners. This is used as a divine quality twice in the Qur’an, like in the following example:

“Then they [planned and] plotted, and Allah also planned, and Allah is the **Best of planners.**” (3:54)

15.10. **Khādi‘** (خادع): Literally meaning deceiver, this term is used once in the Qur’an for God and suggests that those who think they can deceive God only deceive themselves. They can never defeat God. The Qur’an says:

“The hypocrites indeed seek to deceive Allah, but it is He who **outwits** them. When they stand up for prayer,

they stand up lazily, showing off to the people and not remembering Allah except a little.” (4:142)

15.11. **Mukhzi al-kāfirīn** (مخزى الكافرين): In the following verse, God is introduced as the one who brings shame to the faithless and disgraces them:

“Travel [unmolested] in the land for four months, but know that you cannot thwart Allah, and that Allah shall **disgrace the faithless.**” (9:2)

15.12. **Asra‘-u makran** (اسرع مكرًا): In the following verse, God is introduced as the one who is faster and swifter at planning than those who plot against the divine signs:

“When We let people taste [Our] mercy after distress that has befallen them, behold, they scheme against Our signs! Say, ‘Allah is **Swifter at planning.**’ Indeed Our messengers write down what you scheme.” (10:21)

15.13. **Fa‘āl-un limā yurīd** (فعال لما يريد): Meaning the great doer of what He wills. This is mentioned as a divine quality twice. For example, the Qur’an says:

“**The Great doer of what He wills.**” (85:16)

15.14. **Musta‘ān** (مستعان): Meaning the one whose help is sought. This is mentioned twice in the Qur’an. One of these is:

“He said, ‘My Lord! Judge with truth.’ ‘Our Lord is the All-compassionate, **Whose help is sought** against what you ascribe.’” (21:112)

15.15. **Hādī** (هادى): Meaning guide. This is used as a divine quality twice in the Qur’an. For example:

“That is how for every prophet We assigned an enemy from among the guilty, and your Lord suffices as a **Guide and a Helper.**” (25:31)

15.16. **Kāfi-n ‘abdah-u (كاف عبده):** Meaning sufficient for his servant. This is mentioned as a divine quality once in the Holy Qur’an:

“Is not God **sufficient for His servant?** They would frighten you of others than Him. Yet whomever Allah leads astray, has no guide.” (36:36)

15.17. **Fattāh (فتاح):** Meaning the greatest decider or judge. This is used as divine quality once in the Qur’an:

“Say, ‘Our Lord will bring us together, then He will judge between us with truth, and He is the **Greatest decider**, the All-knowing.’” (34:26)

15.18. **Mu’min (مؤمن):** Meaning the securer. This is mentioned as a divine quality in the following verse:

“He is Allah there is no god except Him, the Sovereign, the All-holy, the All-benign, the **Securer**, the All-conserver, the Almighty, the All-compeller, the All-magnanimous. Clear is Allah of any partners that they may ascribe [to Him]!” (59:23)

15.19. **Bāligh-u amrih (بالغ امره):** Meaning the one who carries through his command or accomplishes his purpose. This is used once in the Qur’an for God. It means that God has full command of His affairs and whatever He decides certainly happens. The Qur’an says:

“...and provide for him from whence he does not reckon. And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him. Indeed Allah **carries through His**

**command.** Certainly Allah has set a measure for everything.” (65:3)

15.20. **Khayr al-rāziqīn** (خير الرازقين): Meaning the best of providers. This is used as a divine quality five times in the Qur’an. Two of these is in the following examples:

“Those who migrate in the way of Allah and then are slain, or die, Allah will surely provide them with a good provision. Allah is indeed **the Best of providers.**” (22:58)

and

“Say, ‘Indeed my Lord expands the provision for whomever of His servants that He wishes and tightens it, and He will repay whatever you may spend, and He is **the Best of providers.**’” (34:39)

15.21. **Razzāq** (رزاق): Meaning the provider. This is used as divine quality once:

“Indeed it is Allah who is the **Provider**, the Powerful, the Strong.” (51:58)

15.22. **Zāri‘ūn** (زارعون): This is attributed to God once in the Qur’an and is the plural form of *zāri‘* which means **the one who makes things grow**. The Qur’an says:

“Is it you who make it grow, or are We the **ones who make it grow?**” (56:64)

15.23. **Munzilūn** (منزلون): This is the plural form of *munzil*, which literally means the one who sends down. This is mentioned twice in the Qur’an:

“Is it you who bring it down from the rain cloud, or are We the ones **who bring [it] down?**” (56:69)

and

“We are indeed **going to bring down** upon the people of this town a punishment from the sky because of the transgressions they used to commit.” (29:34)

15.24. **Khayr al-munzilin** (خير المنزليين): Meaning the best to bring ashore or the best to enable to disembark, this is mentioned as a divine quality once:

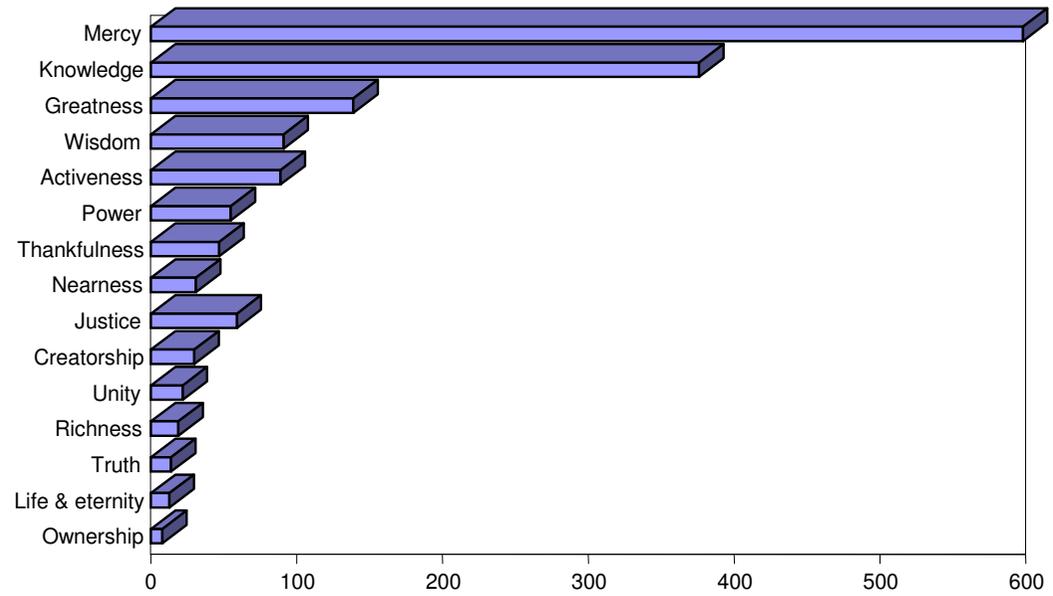
“And say, ‘My Lord! Land me with a blessed landing, for You are the **Best of those who bring ashore.**’” (23:29)

15.25. **Munshi’ūn** (منشئون): This is the plural form of *munshi*’ which means producer. This is mentioned once in the Qur’an:

“Was it you who produced its tree, or were We the **Producers?**” (56:72)

**Chart one: Divine names & attributes in the Qur'an**

[other than Allah (God), ilāh (god) & rabb (Lord)]



## Endnotes

1. In verse 53:5, we read that the Prophet Mohammad was taught by **one of great powers** (تَشْدِيدِ الْقُوَى). Some commentators of the Qur'an believe that this refers to God. For example, see *Tafsir-e Nemūneh*, Vol 22, pp. 487-490. There are others who believe that this refers to the Archangel Gabriel. For example, see *Majma' al-Bayān*, Vol. 9, p. 261.

2. In addition to those 12 cases, in which God is introduced as *waliyy*, there are 11 cases, in which the Qur'an emphasises that there is no *waliyy* who can replace God. There is also a case, in which the Qur'an denies the existence of any other *wāli* (والى; protector) besides God who could protect those who He wishes to visit with ill. See verse 13:11.

3. In addition to those 4 cases, in which God is introduced as *naşir*, there are 7 cases, in which the Qur'an emphasises that there is no *naşir* who can replace God.