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# Terminology and interpretation of the divine successive names in holly **Quran**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Holly Quran is a book sent by Allah to guide people toward himself. And one of his major ways to introduce his way in this book is mentioning his holly names. I have called a group of god's holly names in Quran which have come one after another like" the hearing the seeing"(مسيخ بصير ) or "the coverer the merciful" (مسيخ بصير ), as "the divine successive names", and tried to explain them in terminological, semantical and teleological aspects, I have tried also to discover the miraculous relations between them, and I have called this aspect of quranic miracle as nominal miracle. Arguing about majority of the related questions as for the first time is a reason for necessity and significance of this research for example why "the coverer the merciful" is repeated for 71 times, while "the merciful the coverer" (الرحيم الغفور) is mentioned just once? My researches prove that there is a common point in the verses ended to one combination of holly names, and I have tried to discover these points. The divine successive names are some keys to better understanding of quran.

**Keywords**: the divine successive names, combination, interpretation, nominal miracle, terminology

#### INTRODUCTION

Holly Quran is a book sent by Allah to guide people toward himself. And one of his major ways to introduce his way in this book is mentioning his holly names. But he has used variant ways to mention these names, which guiding to a special issue has been undertaken by each one. We are also sure that choosing these names and the priority and posteriority used between them has not been a preference without any wise cause.

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I have called a group of Allah's holly names in Quran which have come one after another as "عفور" رحيم " or "غفور" رحيم " , " the divine successive names" and tried to explain the terminological, semantical and teleological aspects of them , I have also tried to discover and explain the miraculous relations between them . Knowing that there are about 470 verses in Quran using the divine successive names, can be regarded as a sufficient reason to comprehend the necessity of this research. What will be presented in this article are in fact some corners of a grate research going to be finished on my desk after vast investigations.

The fact is that there have been many researches on the divine names from different views and perspectives, like philosophical or terminological arguments. (sabzewari 1996) But – I hold that – how these names were mentioned by Quran itself, is much more important for understanding their role in pointing to the Allah's way. Although you can find some allusions within the declarations of some researchers, but there has not been any comprehensive research especially on "the divine successive names in Quran" neither a scholar endeavor to discover the relations between them. And because of neglecting some aspects, you can find some interpretations of verses that are far from harmony with others and so far from appropriateness and correctness. Arguing about majority of the related questions as for the first time is another reason for necessity and significance of this research.

The divine names, as mentioned above, have very important position in Holly Quran. but why as you can see the phrase "غفور رحيم" meaning "the coverer the merciful "has been repeated for 71 times whereas phrase "الرحيم الغفور" meaning "the merciful the coverer "has been repeated just for one time? What has caused this priority and posteriority? What has Allah guided commonly in the 71 verses ending to "غفور رحيم" (the coverer the merciful) or 32 verses ending to "غفور رحيم" (the knowing)? Are these of a secret science known only by Allah, or they can also be accessed by human beings?

These are only a small number of questions that we intend to find answers for, in this research. However, it seems that every combination of the divine successive

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names has a special point of appearance and undertakes to lead to a special point as its aim. And the repeating number of every combination is according to the necessity of leading people to such a point. that is if a combination like "the coverer the merciful "is repeated 71 times, whereas "the merciful the loving" ( $\tilde{\zeta} = \tilde{\zeta} = \tilde{\zeta$ 

## DIVINE SUCCESSIVE NAMES IN HOLLY QURAN

The divine names are mentioned in many variant ways within the verses, end of them, or as an independent verse in Quran .one of these ways can be shown as following examples:

(the hearer the seeing) السَّميعُ الْبَصيرُ - A

B- واسِعٌ عَلَيمٌ (the knowing the expander)

C - شاکِرٌ عَليمٌ ( the knowing the thankful )

D- سَميعٌ قَريبٌ (the hearer the near)

I have called this group of the divine names as "the divine successive names". You can also see that this group of names has come in the endings of the verses in different shapes of statements. Some examples are as the following table:

ان الله لطيف خبير (الحج ، ۴۳) - ۵ Such as :

فان الله لغني حميد (ابر اهيم ، ۸) Such as : (ابر اهيم ، ۸)

و ان الله سميع بصير (الحج ، عصير (الحج ، ۱۳ Such as : (۶۱

وَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ (الحج: ٦٤) : Such as - و ان الله لهو \_ \_\_

Of course I have counted forty shapes like these examples, but in any way they show that choosing any of them by Allah is not without reason, as we are sure that he is all-knowing and all-wise . But finding the reasons is not easy and needs a deep thinking.

I have also counted 467 verses mentioning divine successive names in holy Quran and arranged them in an exact and complete table arranged by number of repeating. This table has got 68 lines which show the number of different combinations of these holy names. The firs ten lines of this table are as follow:

arrangement	the divine successive names	number of repeatings
.1	الله الرحمن الرحيم	118
.۲	غَفُورٌ رَحيمٌ	71
.۳	الْعَزيزُ الْحَكيمُ	٤٥
. ٤	السَّميعُ الْعَليمُ	٣٢
.0	الْعَلْيمُ الْحَكِيمُ	79
٦.	الْعَزيزُ الرَّحيمُ	17
٠,٧	السَّميعُ الْبَصيرُ	١.
٠,٨	غَنِيٌّ حَميدٌ	١.
. ٩	تَوَّابٌ رَحيمٌ	٩
1.	الْحَكيمُ الْعَليمُ	٧

The terminology and Interpretation of verses of the divine successive names

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Many of interpretations have tried to explain the meaning of the successive names at the end of some the verses, and some of them also have tried to explain the relation between these holy names with the content of some the verses. For example we can see that Tabarsi(1993)in his interpretation called Majma ol bayan has not offered any interpretation to 17 verses out of 71 verses of "the coverer the merciful", and in 27 verses has interpreted these names without any relation to the text of the verses , satisfying to interpret the Arabic term of "غفور" to covering the sins and the term "رحیه" to bestow the blessings to the believers, and for the remained 24 verses he has weakly connected between the divine names and the content of the verses. (Tabarsi, 1993)

I hold that the divine successive names are some keys to comprehend the related verses. Because there is a relationship between the holy names which are at the end of the every verse with its content. So you can find a common point between all verses ended to special combination of the divine successive names.

For example the holy names "the invincible the merciful "(Azizon Rahim) has been repeated 12 times, 9 of them in the 24<sup>th</sup> Surah. 8 of these 9 verses ends to the phrase "And your lord is the invincible the merciful" (وَ إِنَّ رَبِّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ). Let's have a brief review to these 8 verses:

The first case is after some verses threatening our holy prophet's enemies to be sent some punishments from sky toward them. The second is after the famous story of Moses (AS) which ends to Gods help by sinking pharaoh's soldiers and saving Moses and his friends. The third to the eight cases mention the stories of every of Abraham , Nuh , Hud, Salih , Lut ,Shuaib, that how they called people to obey Allah , how their enemies were punished by God and got torment and how did finally God helped their friends the believers to Allah and saved them .

So we can see two common events in these verses. The first one is the punishment and torment of the prophets' enemies, and the second is saving the prophets and their friends. So you can find out that there is a relationship between these two events and the two divine successive names used at the end of the verses. The firs event is as the result of Allah being "the invincible" and the second is the result of him being "the merciful".

So we can have a better comprehension of other verses ended to these two divine names. For example we can see that in the same Surah after mentioning history of the named prophets, Allah the exalted declares:

But if they disobey you, say," I am absolved of what you do .And put your trust in the invincible, the merciful. (24:216-217)

According to what we found out, this verse means:

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Do not get worried and Trust your lord the same who knocked the named prophets' enemies down and helped the prophets and their friend. So he will defeat your enemies too and he will help your friends as well.

I have searched almost all the existing interpretations of Quran, but I have not found this new explanation in them. This result is emerged out of systematic approach to the verses of the divine successive names.

Also we can have a better understanding of other verses used in them the same successive names. In this case the verses are:

 ${\it A}$  - at Allah's help. He helps whomever He wishes, and He is the invincible, the merciful. (30:5)

B-(This holy book is) descended by the invincible, the merciful. (36:5)

C- Verily the Day of sorting out is the time appointed for all of them .The Day when no protector can avail his client in aught, and no help can they receive. Except such as receive Allah's Mercy: for He is the invincible, the merciful (44:42)

So you can see evidently the relationship between these holy names and the content of the verses, and you can have a better understanding of them. For example B means that this holy book is descended by who defeats your enemies if they reject your invitation and helps your friends who believe in this book and saves them from the enemies.

Although supported by other verses, this is also a new interpretation of the verse that you can find it in no book.

The other example of interpretation by the help of systematic view to the verses of the divine successive names is the verses of "the coverer the merciful" (غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ). there are 71 verses ended to these two holy names, while there is a single verse ended to "the merciful the coverer" (الرَّحِيمُ الْعَفُورُ). Is this without any reason? Not Certainly. But what is the difference between these two groups. What is the common point in the first group not found in the second?

Before answering to these questions, you must know that an important factor causing many interpreters not asking these questions or giving some wrong explanations, is neglecting from terminological significance of the Arabic word of "غُورِ". According to Arabic terminologists, this word originally means "the coverer" (Ragib e esfahani, hosein ibn Mohammad, 1901), while they usually interpret it as "the forgiver". You can see that this mistake got to the English translation of holy Quran too (Yusuf Ali, 2006) (Saffarzadeh, Tahir 2001). In any way, this is while the term is used in Quran, in some verses, where no sin is mentioned. For example:

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Allah has only forbidden to you flesh of Dead animals and blood and flesh Of the swine, and that which is Slaughtered without mentioning Allah's Name while slaughtering; but If one is forced by necessity without Willful disobedience or intention of Transgressing the due limits, there is No sin on him. Truly, Allah is The Merciful the coverer. (2:173)

So to translate or interpret the term "غَفُورٌ" to "the forgiver" is wrong as there is no sin committed by any body mentioned in the verse .but what is covered by Allah in this case?

One who eats a little flesh of Dead animals and blood or flesh of the swine even If forced by necessity, may be worried and ask"can having them - although not intentionally- some bad effects preventing or slowing me to get near to my God and perfection?

Allah the exalted puts this worry aside by announcing that this kind of bad effects is covered by him and made ineffective.

When I paid attention to this point, I studied all the 71 verses and thought deeply about their content and tried to find the common point guided by them. So I noticed that we can divide these 71 verses to two different parts: "Sin cases" and "Not sin cases". The above verse is an example of not sin cases. Sin cases mention sins generally or some specified sins. A good example, for this group can be as following:

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 the coverer the merciful.(6:54)

In the sin cases too, Allah calls the people who have committed some sins to get back to the right way. But they may be despaired of themselves and think that they can never be accepted by Allah or they can not be accepted as a real believer or they can not get to paradise as an effect of their previous sins. So Allah the exalted declares for them if they return and reform their bad doings, God will cover the effects of their works and make them ineffective so they can be concerned as a real believer and get to the paradise in the Day of Judgment.

Thus you can see that there are two common points in both sin cases and not sin cases. Firstly to cover the probably bad effects of some works of people as a result of Allah being the coverer , and secondly concern them as a real believer and get to God's mercy or to the paradise in the Day of Judgment for sake of the Allah being the merciful . You can also see that the first (covering the bad effects) is a preparation for the second

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This point is a key to a better comprehension of 71 verses ending to holy divine names of "the coverer the merciful". But let's see the only verse ending to "the merciful the coverer".

He knows whatever enters into the earth and whatever emerges from it, and whatever descends from the sky and whatever ascends into it, and He is the merciful the coverer (34:2)

I have checked more than 100 famous Sunni and Shiite interpretations of Quran for this verse. I was sorry to see that none of them asked about the difference and to see that all of them have interpreted the Arabic term "الْغَفُورُ" as "the forgiver" and to say that Allah forgives the sins of the believers and he is merciful to them. But they did not notice that this interpretation has no relationship with the content of the verse. They did not pay attention that there is not any work of people having a probable bad effect mentioned in this verse. In other words, this verse is neither of a Sin case nor of a Not sin case. Which sin or wok's bad effect is going to be covered in this verse?

The answer is nothing of them. If you notice the verse you can see that it points out to the things which inters the earth and also to the things that ascends into it and gets out of our view, so they are really covered. And at the same time, this verse shows a sign of Allah being the merciful, because imagine what would happen if nothing could neither inter the earth nor get out of it? And what would happen if nothing could neither inter our atmosphere, nor get out of it? Many things would differ. Sunshine could not get to us, agriculture and growing would be impossible and life could not be found in the earth, just like many other planets in the universe. Allah could make our earth like them but he did not, as he is merciful, in fact the coverer the merciful.

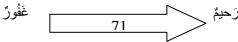
What caused those all interpreters not to reach to this meanings? I hold that first of all, they did not have computer like us to use it for searching all verses including a specified word so that study them systematically. And secondly they did mistake by interpreting the Arabic word of "غُفُورٌ" as who forgives the sins.

Once upon a day when I talked a friend about this, he asked "how can you be sure that you the single are right and those hundred of interpreters are wrong? " I said as I have proved my idea with many clues and through a comprehensive study comparing all the related verses, but they have not any clue and you can see no relation between the verse and the divine names if interpreted so.

## RELATION AND REPEATING TABLE

I noticed the amount of repeating the divine successive names and tried to find a relationship between them. So I used Fletchers to show how many times they are repeated in holy Quran. For example to show that (عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ) is repeated 71 times I did as the following:

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When I completed the table, I was astonished to discover the miraculous relations between these divine names. Of course I did not translate the table in to English, because in many cases there are not exact translations for these Arabic terms. Although I am sure that Muslim Quranic scientists will not face to any problem understanding the table.this table is offered at the end of this paper . Some attractive points in this table are as following:

- 1- Neither of combinations of the divine successive names in holy Quran is isolated. This shows a kind of firm dependence between them.
- 2- You can not say that position of the names in this table is completely arbitrarily. However, the term Allah (الله) and the He (هو), considered as the most important names are positioned at the top of the table. And some similar names like (الشاكر) and (الشاكر) are stated close together although they are not joined together as other successive names.
- 3- There is common point guided toward by the verses ended to a special combination of divine successive names, while these verses are descended gradually during 23 years some of them before Hijra and the other after that . So I have called this "the nominal miracle" of holy Quran which proves all the verses to be divine. I am happy to discover many aspects of the nominal miracle for the first time and thank Allah for it. I have also discovered the common point of many such combinations.
- 4- According to this table, 4 names of the merciful (الرحيم), the invincible (الْعَزيزُ), the coverer (غَفُورٌ), and the all-wise (الْعَكيمُ), the all-knowing (الْعَليمُ) have central roles so that they are at the beginning or ending of many combinations:

The divine name	at the beginning	at the ending
the merciful (الرحيم)	2	218
(الْعَزِيزُ) the invincible	٧¢	0
the coverer (غَفُورٌ)	80	9
the all-wise (الْحَكيمُ)	12	78
the all-knowing (الْعَليمُ)	37	41

As a result of my investigations, we can say that the first name in every combination of names is a cause or preparation for appearance of the second. Thus since 218 combinations of divine successive names ends to the name of the merciful, it means that guiding people to get to Allah's mercy is the most important goal of holy Quran. This is while no combination ends to "الْغَزِيزُ which can best be translated to the invincible and inaccessible ( ibn manzur 1993). That is no verse guides us to an inaccessible god, although his inaccessibility is a cause for, or leads to some other facts, just like what I explained about combination of "the invincible the merciful "facts, just like what I explained about combination of the invincible the merciful" (الْغَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ), where we saw that the invincibility of Allah caused the enemies of the

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prophets be defeated. And there are only two combinations beginning with "the merciful":

A- "the merciful the coverer" (الرَّحيمُ الْغَفُورُ)

B-"the merciful the most loving "(رَحِيمٌ وَدُودٌ)"

As I previously explained the first case, you saw that it is not related with people deeds but it mentions the general mercy of Allah which includes the earth and all its creatures. But if you pay attention at the second and compare it with 218 verses containing some divine names ended to –"the merciful", as a result, you can infer that 218 verses in holy Quran lead people to Allah's mercy, and when they get to this point they can get to a further supreme stage; that is to love Allah and to be loved by him.

5- There are some cases in holy Quran in which divine names are conjunct together by "and ". This certainly means that there is a difference in these cases with those not conjunct by an "and", a difference in the meaning. We can replace the words in a conjunction, but you can not replace the divine successive names. Just As you saw the difference between "the merciful the coverer "and "the coverer the merciful". Another example is the following verse:

(He is) the Forgiver of sin, <u>and</u> The Accepter of Repentance, the Severe in Retribution and the Owner of all Bounties. There is no God but Allah and to Him is the return of all. (40:3)

Why did Allah used "and" only between the first two names of him? Even if we are not sure about the answer, we can be sure that there is a reason here .because we are sure that he is all-wise. This also shows a specialty in the divine successive names that Allah has shown us some clues about them.

6- The complicacy between the relations of holy names in this table shows that although Allah intends to guide as to the right way and to his mercy, people may be faced with different situations, variable duties, and complicated relations with many things, but they can find their way to the only God, his mercy and then his love.

7-The other point which can be inferred from the table with a philosophical precision is that the divine names are sometimes divided to innate and active names (Mohaghghegh, Mohammad baghir 1993). Innate names can not be separated from his essence, and active names are those related with the creatures or those appeared in the world. Which division are the divine successive names from? Some cases explained in this article are enough to prove them to be from the second, but the following verse can be known as the best clue for our claim:

Then indeed your Lord, to those who commit evil out of ignorance and then repent after that, and reform indeed, your Lord after that will surely be the coverer the merciful. (16:119)

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The point is that if these names were innate and inseparable from his essence, he would have them both before and after people reform their conducts. So they are not innate but active names of him which every combination of them appears in a special situation.

## Divine successive names declared by some special servants of Allah

There are some verses in which some special servants of Allah use Divine successive names in their statements, for example:

## 1- Abraham & Ishmael:

*Indeed you are the All-clement, the merciful.* (2:182)

## 2- Abraham & Ishmael:

Indeed you are the All-clement, the All-merciful (2:128)

#### 3- Abraham & Ishmael:

*Indeed you are the All-mighty, the All-wise.* (2:129)

## 4- Jacob addressing Joseph:

Your Lord is indeed all-knowing, all-wise. (12:6)

### 5- Joseph:

*Indeed my Lord is the coverer the merciful.* (12:53)

## 6- Salih:

*My Lord is indeed the near the responsive.* (11:61)

#### 7- Those that Allah chose from his servants:

Indeed Our Lord is the coverer the appreciative.

#### 8- Solomon's friend:

And whoever is ungrateful (should know that) my Lord is indeed all-sufficient, all-generous (27:40)

## 9 - The wife of Imran:

*Indeed you are the All-hearing, the All-knowing.* (3:35)

#### 10- Angles:

*Indeed you are the All-knowing, the All-wise.* (2:32)

These verses show that Allah has taught his special servants to call him with a certain combination of divine names. Also they prove that knowing the divine successive names is a special knowledge. But this knowledge is accessible to people just as friend of Solomon used it, although he was not even a prophet.

So we can also get to this knowledge and discover many facts by the keys given by Allah to many things that has not been appeared to us till today in many variant fields which may guide people to the right way.

The similarities and dissimilarities of other than Allah in the successive names.

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In some verses Allah has used the same successive names for himself as for the other people or existences. Some of the cases are as following:

## 1- As an attribute of the holy prophet:

Holy Quran calls the holy prophet as "the kind the merciful to the faithful":

Here has certainly come to you an apostle from among yourselves. Grievous to him is your distress; he is full of concern for you and the kind the merciful to the faithful. (9:128)

This combination of names has been used for Allah in five cases; one of them is the most similar to the above one:

Indeed Allah is the kind the merciful to mankind. (22:65)

But the difference is that domain of Allah's mercy and kindness is introduced to be more widespread than the holy prophet's, including not only the faithful but also all mankind. But this dose not mean that the holy prophet was not merciful and kind to mankind, but it means that the faithful enjoy not only the mercy and kindness of Allah the creature by getting his general blessings as food or any other sustenance, but also particular guiding offered by the holy prophet which leads to Allah's special blessings and mercies and to the paradise.

## 2- As an attribute of the human being

Allah has been called to be as "the hearing, the seeing" in ten verses, Quran also has called the human being with the same names:

Surely we have created man from a small life germ uniting (itself) We mean to try him, so we have made him the hearing, the seeing. (76:2)

Tabatabaii (1996) in his interpretation to Quran called Almizan fi tafsir el Quran holds that this verse means:

We have made human being the hearing the seeing so that he hears whatever came to him from the divine invitations, and sees the divine signs which proves his unity and prophecy and the resurrection day. (vol20,p.121),

There are also some cases dissimilar to the divine successive names. The strangest one may be the following:

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Surely the tree of the Zaqqum (43) Is the food of the sinful (44) "Like dregs of oil; it shall boil in their bellies"(45) Like the boiling of hot water (46) Seize him, then drag him down into the middle of the Hell (47) Then pour above his head of the torment of the boiling water (48)" Taste; you forsooth are the invincible, the honorable" (49)

According to many interpretations the sinful person referred here is Abujahl, as he said to the holy prophet:

Among the two surrounding mountains of Mecca, There is no one more invincible and honorable than me! I swear that neither of you nor your god can do any wrong about me! And I am the most invincible man here.( Siuti , Jalal id din , 1983,vol.6,p.33 ) (Ghurtubi , Mohammad ibn Ahmad, 1997, vol.16,p.151)

So the torment angle says to him: oh! Who called himself the invincible, the honorable! Taste this torment.

You can not find much more than this in different interpretations. It is clear that the sinful person was called to be the invincible the honorable (عزيز كريم) on ridicule not on real. But I wished at least one of them asked himself, why this combination of names has not been used for Allah although he is both the invincible and the honorable. Can this verse have a deeper meaning?

First of all, I hold that this is another confirmation for my idea that you must not put an "and" between the divine successive names when you are translating or interpreting them. Because although Allah is both the invincible and the honorable, has never been called "the invincible the honorable".

The second point is that the term "کریم" means both the honorable and the generous (Toraihi, fakhr ed din, 1996), and the term "عزیز" means both the invincible and the inaccessible also we must know that the term "کریم" as name for Allah has come only after "the rich" (غنی) in holy Quran.

So if we remember that the first name is used as a preparation for the second, we can infer that being inaccessible is not a preparation for being generous. In other words, the one who is inaccessible can not be generous to all people. But one who is unlimitedly rich can be generous.

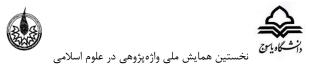
So the verse means that the angles say to the sinful that you could not be a generous man because you were inaccessible for the poor during your life. And you are not inaccessible here as you must taste the torments. So now, you are neither invincible or inaccessible, nor honorable in the hell.

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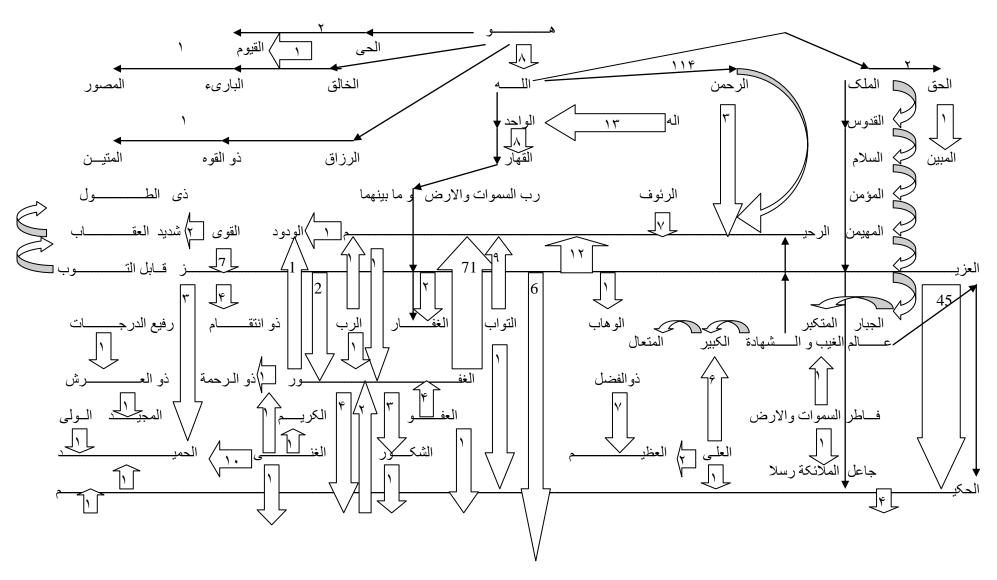
There remains another point and that is to know that in one verses Allah has been named as "الْعَزِيزِ الْوَهَّابِ" (the inaccessible the Bountiful). So you may ask according to what we said just now, how can be one who is inaccessible a generous or Bountiful person. The answer is that this combination of names means that as Allah has an inaccessible situation, he can bestow some blessings that can not be given by anyone else. This interpretation is derived after terminology of the related terms and by studying usages of the term "الْوَهَّابِ" or its co families. For example:

To Allah belongs the Dominion of The heavens and the earth: He creates whatever He Wills: He bestows female Child upon whom He Wills and male Child to whom He Wills. (42:49)

We know that bestowing a female or male child to a family can be merely done by Allah. Although, in spite of all developments in medicine, physicians can do only some preparations, but they can not definitely determine the sexuality of the child.

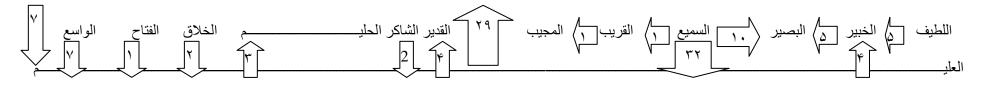


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