سَلمٌ عَلَيۡكُمۡ

Salamun Alaikum (Peace be upon you)

'ALLAH' IS NOT AN EXCLUSIVE NAME FOR GOD

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It is becoming increasingly understood by many Muslims that the name 'Allah' is the only correct designation for God. This understanding is neither supported by the Quran nor by history.

The name 'Allah' is **only** an **Arabic** name for God. It is **not** an exclusive name for God. God is understood as an unfathomable, supreme entity not a name.

The reason why the Quran makes use of the word 'Allah' to refer to God is because the Quran is primarily addressing an Arab audience and therefore has been conveyed in Arabic speech. Previous scriptures were not in Arabic nor did previous messengers speak Arabic. The names for God in the previous scriptures are in the language of the Hebrew and later Greek scriptures not in Arabic. For example, 'El' as is cited in the Hebrew Tanakh refers to an entity, a supreme power and not just a Canaanite God.

> **See Exodus 6.2-3:**
> "And God spoke to Moses and said to him, I am the Lord **(Hebrew: Yahweh)** and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty **(Hebrew: 'El Shaddai')** but I was not known to them by my name 'Yahweh'

Therefore, Prophet Abraham ^(pbuh) knew God as 'El' as did prophets Isaac and Jacob ^(pbut) and not as 'Yahweh' (As Prophet Moses ^(pbuh) knew him) or 'Allah' as the Arabs would come to know of Him. In all the names, the reference is to **One Deity**.

Even today, Arab Jews and Christians still refer to their God as 'Allah'.

Even before the old religion of Islam was revealed to the Pagan Arabs, Jewish and Christian Arabs used 'Allah' as the name for their **God**. The following Quranic verse confirms this.

002.116
"They say: "Allah has begotten a son" Glory be to Him. Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything renders worship to Him"

005.018

"(Both) the Jews and the Christians say: "We are sons of Allah, and his beloved." Say: "Why then does He punish you for your sins? Nay, ye are but men, of the men he has created: He forgives whom He pleases, and He punishes whom He pleases: and to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between: and to Him is the final goal (of all)"

Many Muslims make the counter claim that Christians and Jews used the true name of God because they had previous scriptures revealed to them. But this line of reasoning is easily defeated by the Quran when it makes it clear that **even** the Arab **idolaters** (Mushrikeen) called their 'high' God, 'Allah'

029.061

"If indeed you ask them who has created the Heavens and the Earth and subjected the Sun and the Moon (to his Law), **they will certainly reply, "Allah".** How are they then deluded away (from the truth)"?

However, the Quran asks the 'idolaters' (Mushrikeen) not to associate **any** partners with the **One God**, in His majesty, in His power, in His judgment or indeed, to **invoke anyone** apart from Him. This can be seen in the following verse.

039.038

"If indeed you ask them who is it that created the Heavens and the Earth, **they would be sure to say, "Allah".** Say: **"Then do you see what you invoke besides Allah?** Can they, if Allah wills some penalty for me, remove His penalty? Or if He wills some grace for me, can they keep back his grace?" Say: "Sufficient is Allah for me! In Him do the trusting put their trust""

Whether we call Him Rab, Lord, God, Almighty, Krishna, Khuda, Yahweh, Elohim, Adi Purush (Timeless being); Para Brahman (The absolute Truth) , El, Eli, Eloi, Jehovah, or whichever beautiful name we call Him, it is with respect, humility and grace that we take His name with the sole **intention** that **He** is **One** and **Only One** that we serve. That He is **alone** in His majesty, that He created the Heavens and the Earth and everything in it and to Him is our final return. He cannot be represented by an idol or a statue and is the only One truly worthy of worship.

It is the entity, the majestic power, the One and True all knowing, all powerful that one refers to not to a particular name. God, in His tremendous majesty simply cannot be restricted to any name or any number of names (The concept of 99 names of Allah is from Ahadith **not** the Quran). This would be in effect a restriction on His majesty and God can never be contained, neither physically or linguistically.

It is **how** you perceive God (without associates and partners), His entity, and His transcendent majesty not by what beautiful name you call Him.

CALL HIM BY ANY BEAUTIFUL NAME

017:110

"Say: "Call upon **Allah**, or call upon **Rahman**: **by whatever name ye call upon Him, (it is well): for to Him belong the most beautiful names.** Neither speak thy Prayer aloud, nor speak it in a low tone, but seek a middle course between.""

This also proves that you can call upon your God by **any** beautiful name in your prayers.

007.180
"**The most beautiful names belong to God: so call on Him by them**; but shun such men as use profanity in His names: for what they do, they will soon be requited"

FINAL THOUGHTS

'Allah' is only an Arabic name for God. It is the name that the Pagan Arabs were familiar with during the time of revelation to refer to their Supreme authority. It was the name of God that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was familiar with. Allah has been known by different names to great Prophets of the past in the languages of their own people. All beautiful names belong to God.

It is interesting to note that most Quranic prayers use the generic title 'Rabbana' (Our Lord) as opposed to Allah.

Please see related article [1] below.

Related Article:

(1)   Some Prayers From the Quran

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