247961 - Does it say anywhere in the Quran that Allah is perfect, with no shortcomings?

the question

Hello, does the Quran state that Allah is perfect? If not, do Muslims believe that Allah I perfect?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The Muslims are unanimously agreed in their belief that Allah, may He be exalted, is possessed of the utmost perfection and that He is above all shortcomings, no matter how small or insignificant. All the Muslim scholars have ascribed absolute perfection to Allah, may He be exalted, such as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) who said:

Perfection is something that is affirmed with regard to Allah. In fact what is established is the utmost perfection, to the extent that there is no perfection that is free of any shortcomings but it is affirmed and established that the Lord, may He be exalted, is deserving of it, as His Essence is sanctified. As that is confirmed and established, this implies the negation of the opposite in His case. So affirmation of the divine attribute of life implies negation of death; affirmation of the divine attribute of knowledge implies negation of ignorance; affirmation of the divine attribute of power implies negation of helplessness. This perfection is affirmed and established in His case on the basis of rational evidence and certain proof, in addition to the proofs mentioned in the texts of revelation which prove that. End quote.

Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (6/71).

And he said:

There is consensus that Allah, may He be exalted, cannot be described with anything other than

attributes of perfection. End quote.

Bayaan Talbees al-Jahamiyyah (2/330).

And he said:

What may explain that is the fact that the Muslims are agreed that Allah, may He be exalted, is to be declared far above all defects and shortcomings, and that His attributes are the attributes of perfection, although they may differ concerning some issues, whether affirming or denying some attributes is tantamount to attributing shortcomings to Him, and how to attain knowledge concerning that.

End quote from Minhaaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah (2/563)

He also said:

It is known that there is consensus that Allah, may He be exalted, is to be declared above all attributes of shortcomings, which means to declare Him to be free of any shortcomings with regard to attributes that have to do with action and other attributes that are not connected to His actions. End quote.

Dar' Ta'aarud al-'Aql wa'n-Naql (4/89).

Moreover, this is what is dictated by sound reasoning: how could a man worship a Lord who he does not believe to be absolutely perfect or he thinks that shortcomings could affect His Essence or any of His attributes?!

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Shortcomings or imperfections are not possible for Allah, on the basis of reason, just as they are not possible for Him on the basis of religious texts. Reason dictates that He, may He be glorified, must have attributes of perfection, and shortcomings are something contrary to the attributes of perfection. End quote.

Sharh al-Isbahaaniyyah (412).

Moreover, this is also what is dictated by sound common sense that has not been corrupted or changed from its original creation, as Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So set you (O Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) your face towards the religion (of pure Islamic Monotheism) Hanif (worship none but Allah Alone) Allah’s Fitrah (i.e. Allah’s Islamic Monotheism), with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in Khalq-illah (i.e. the religion of Allah — Islamic Monotheism), that is the straight religion, but most of men know not”

[ar-Room 30:30].

Shaykh al-Islam (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Affirming the Creator and affirming His perfection is something that comes naturally to one whose fitrah and commonsense are sound, yet at the same time there is a great deal of evidence to that effect.

Many people may need such evidence, if their common sense has been distorted and subjected to some influences. End quote.

Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (6/73).

Secondly:

As stated above in the quotations from Shaykh al-Islam, the texts of revelation, including the verses of the Qur’an, indicate that perfection is established in the case of Allah, may He be exalted.

What must be noted is that the meaning of any book is not only based on the apparent meaning of its words; rather there are other factors to be taken into consideration. One of those factors is that on which wise people are all agreed, regardless of their religious belief, which is that

understanding is to be based on examination of various texts and what the text indicates on the basis of context, the spirit of the text and the meanings of the text. If we bear that in mind, then we may say that even though the attribute of perfection (kamaal) is not mentioned per se in the Qur'an, the verses of the Quran refer to it in many ways, among the most important and clearest of which are the following:

-1-

By examining the texts of the Holy Quran, we find that Allah, may He be exalted, has described Himself with attributes of perfection.

Allah, may He be exalted, calls Himself by names which reflect many attributes of perfection, then He describes His names as husna (beautiful) in many verses, such as the following (interpretation of the meaning):

"And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allah, so call on Him by them, and leave the company of those who belie or deny (or utter impious speech against) His Names. They will be requited for what they used to do"

[al-A'raaf 7:180].

As the utmost level of perfection in beauty belongs to Allah, may He be exalted, this dictates that the opposite of that is negated, namely attributes of shortcomings and imperfection.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

In brief, the religious texts affirm His beautiful names and attributes of perfection. So whatever is the opposite of that is negated in the religious texts, which also rule out any notion that anyone could be equal or comparable to Him, because affirming a thing is tantamount to negating its opposite and what is implied by its opposite. Reason or rational thinking understands this negation. So affirming one of two opposites constitutes negation of the other and whatever may be implied by the other.

The ways to know what the Lord is to be declared above of shortcomings are numerous. End quote.

Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (3/84)

Therefore Allah followed this description – of having beautiful names – in another verse by affirming that He is the One Who deserves to be glorified.

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

“He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise”

[al-Hashr 59:24].

Tasbeeh (often translated as “glorification”) means declaring Allah to be above all shortcomings.

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

The root meaning of tasbeeh is declaring Allah to be above shortcomings, declaring Him to be holy and declaring Him to be innocent and free of shortcomings. End quote.

An-Nihaayah fi Ghareeb al-Hadith (2/331).

If the attributes of Allah are all part of His utmost beauty and perfection, and Allah is also to be declared far above any shortcomings, this is clear proof from the Quran that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, is perfect.

-2-

Many verses of the Quran speak of tasbeeh or glorifying Allah, and urge people to say words of tasbeeh. In linguistic terms, tasbeeh means declaring Allah to be above all shortcomings, as mentioned above, and declaring Allah, may He be exalted, to be above all shortcomings implies a negation of all shortcomings on His part. So if all shortcomings are negated in the case of Allah,

may He be exalted, that means that there are none of His attributes that do not indicate His perfection.

As declaring Allah, may He be exalted, to be above all shortcomings implies that He is perfect, tasbeeh is followed in many verses with praise of Allah, because praising Him is indicative of His perfection and indeed implies it by necessity.

An example is the verse in which Allah, He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Glorified is your Lord, the Lord of Honour and Power! (He is free) from what they attribute unto Him!

And peace be on the Messengers!

And all the praises and thanks are to Allah, Lord of the 'Alameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)”

[as@-S@aaffaat 37:180-182].

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his commentary on this verse:

Allah, may He be exalted, declares Himself to be above all shortcomings, declares Himself to be holy and declares Himself to be innocent and free of all that the wrongdoers, liars and transgressors say.

“And all the praises and thanks are to Allah, Lord of the 'Alameen (mankind, jinn and all that exists)” means: to Him be praise at the beginning and at the end in all situations.

As tasbeeh implies declaring Allah to be above and innocent of all shortcomings, and it implies affirmation of His perfection, and as praise also implies declaring Allah to be above all shortcomings, they are mentioned together in this passage and in many other places in the Quran. End quote.

Tafseer Ibn Katheer (7/46)

-3-

If we understand, as mentioned above, that Allah declares Himself to be above all shortcomings, and that this implies that He does not have any attributes except attributes for which He may be praised, then Allah, may He be exalted, is telling us that in these praiseworthy attributes He is far superior to the attributes of His creation, and no one can match Him in any of them, and this is the utmost perfection.

Allah, may He be exalted, says, explaining His being above His creation in His Essence and His attributes (interpretation of the meaning):

“So, call you (O Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and the believers) upon (or invoke) Allah making (your) worship pure for Him (Alone) (by worshipping none but Him and by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah’s sake only and not to show off and not to set up rivals with Him in worship). however much the disbelievers (in the Oneness of Allah) may hate (it).

(He is Allah) Owner of High Ranks and Degrees, the Owner of the Throne”

[Ghaafir 40:14-15].

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

“And He it is Who originates the creation, then will repeat it (after it has been perished), and this is easier for Him. His is the highest description (i.e. none has the right to be worshipped but He, and there is nothing comparable unto Him) in the heavens and in the earth. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise”

[ar-Room 30:27].

And He states that none of His creation is like Him, as He, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer”

[ash-Shoora 42:11].

All of this is indicative of the utmost perfection of the attributes of Allah, may He be exalted.

-4-

Allah called Himself by names, each one of which is indicative of His utmost perfection and His being free of any shortcomings. These names include the following:

(i) Al-Quddoos (the Holy)

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

“Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth glorifies Allah, the King (of everything), the Holy, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise”

[al-Jumu ‘ah 62:1].

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

One of the names of Allah, may He be exalted, is al-Quddoos (the Holy), which means the Pure One, Who is far above and free of all shortcomings. In grammatical terms, the word Quddoos is an intensive form. End quote.

An-Nihaayah (4/23)

(ii) As-Salaam (the One Free from all defects)

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

“He is Allah beside Whom is Laa ilaaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He) the King, the Holy, the One Free from all defects..”

[al-Hashr 59:23].

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

As as-Salaam is one of the names of Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, and it is a name the comes from a root meaning soundness, Allah, may He be exalted, is more deserving of this name than all others, for He is the One Who is free of all defects, flaws, shortcomings and criticisms. To him belongs absolute perfection in all aspects, and perfection is an essential part of His Essence, and it cannot be otherwise. The name as-Salaam implies that His deeds are free of any idleness, wrongdoing and anything that is contrary to wisdom; and that His attributes are free of any similarity to the attributes of created beings; and that His Essence is free of any shortcomings or faults; and that His names are free of any blameworthy meanings. So the name as-Salaam implies an affirmation of all perfections and a negation of all shortcomings in His case. End quote.

Ahkaam Ahl adh-Dhimmah (1/413-414).

(iii) As-Samad

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

“Say (O Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)): He is Allah, (the) One

Allah-us-Samad [Allah the Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, (He neither eats nor drinks)]”

[al-Ikhlaas 112:1-2].

At-Tabari narrated in his Tafseer (24/736) that Ibn ‘Abbaas said concerning the words, “us-Samad [the Self-Sufficient Master]”:

That is, the Master Who is perfect in power, the Prominent One Who is perfect in His prominence, the Great One Who is perfect in His greatness, the Forbearing One Who is perfect in His forbearance, the Self-Sufficient One Who is perfect in His self-sufficiency, the Compeller Who is perfect in His compelling, the All-Knowing Who is perfect in His knowledge; the Most Wise Who is perfect in His wisdom. He is the One Who is perfect in all aspects of prominence and might, He is Allah, may He be glorified, and these are His attributes; it is not appropriate to ascribe them to any but Him.

Shaykh Muhammad al-Ameen ash-Shinqeeti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Some of the scholars said: as-Samad means the Master to Whom everyone turns at times of hardship and need.

Some of them said that it means the Master Whose might, prominence, greatness, knowledge and wisdom are perfect.

Some of them said that as-Samad is the One who begets not, nor was He begotten, and there is none like unto Him. According to this view, everything that comes after this word (in the soorah) explains it.

Some of them said that it means the Eternal One Who will remain after His creation ceases to be.

Some of them said that as-Samad is the One Who is not hollow and does not eat food…

It is well known in Arabic usage that the word as-samad is used to refer to a great master, or something that is solid and not hollow…

Once you understand this, then Allah, may He be exalted, is the Master to Whom alone people turn at times of hardship and need; He is the One Who is holy and exalted and far above the attributes of created beings, such as eating food and the like. Glorified and exalted be He far above that. End quote.

Adwa' al-Bayaan, 2/220-221.

(iv) Al-Hameed (the Praiseworthy)

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

"O mankind! it is you who stand in need of Allah, But Allah is Rich (Free of all needs), Worthy of all praise"

[Faatir 35:15].

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

Al-Hameed (the Praiseworthy) is the One Who is deserving of praise for His actions. He is the one Who is praised during times of joy and times of sorrow, in hardship and in ease, because He is Most Wise, Who makes no mistakes in His actions. So He is praiseworthy in all circumstances. End quote.

Sha'n ad-Du'aa' (p. 78)

Conclusion:

The perfection of Allah, may He be exalted, is proven in the Quran in several ways.

And Allah knows best.