211853 - Names of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that were given to him by Allah

the question

Did Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, choose or decree that the name of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) should be Muhammad? Is Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, the one who gave His Prophet the following names: Ahmad, al-Maahi, al-Haashir, al-‘Aaqib and other names, or did the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) give himself these names? Did the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) call himself, or was he known among the people after his mission began, by the name of Ahmad?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Muslim believes that everything that happens in this universe, small or great, significant or insignificant, all comes from Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and happens by His will and decree, as Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, We have created all things with Qadar (Divine Preordainments of all things before their creation, as written in the Book of Decrees Al-Lauh Al-Mahfooz)” [al-Qamar 54:49]

“And everything, small and big is written (in Al-Lauh Al-Mahfooz already beforehand i.e. before it befalls, or is done by its doer)”[al-Qamar 54:53]

“While Allah has created you and what you make”[as-Saaffaat 38:96].

Nothing that happens in this world is excluded from this principle, and that includes the noble names that were given to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). They only came about by the will and decree of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. We have several texts that

prove this point:

-1-When the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told his companions about his names, he only spoke on the basis of revelation that had been revealed to him: and he did not speak of anything on his own initiative, as Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Nor does he speak of (his own) desire.

It is but a revelation revealed”[an-Najm 53:3-4].

-2-Many of these names are mentioned in the Holy Quran, and the Quran is the word of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. The names that He chose in the Book for His noble Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) are a further honour for this great Prophet. As-Suyooti listed what he found of names of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) – by way of deriving them from his attributes and actions – and his list reached three hundred and forty-odd names, which he divided into various categories and said: The first category is names that are mentioned clearly in the Quran as names; they are Muhammad and Ahmad…"(Ar-Riyaadh al-Aneeqah p. 7)

-3- This is what was understood by the noble Sahaabah and trustworthy scholars about most of what we have come across of what was written about this topic.

Imam az-Zuhri (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Allah called him most compassionate, most merciful. Narrated by Muslim (6177)

Abu’l-‘Abbaas al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

His names only came to him through revelation; he did not call himself by any name except those by which Allah called him."(Al-Mufhim 6/150).

Ibn al-‘Arabi al-Maliki (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Allah gave the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) many names; when a thing is of great significance it is given many names."(‘Aaridat al-Ahwadhi 10/281)

Al-Qaadi ‘Iyaad (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The virtue of our Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is indicated by the fact that Allah mentioned some of his names in His holy Book, and on the lips of His Prophets in many variations."(Ash-Shifa 1/459)

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

‘Iyaad said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was Ahmad before he was Muhammad, because he was called Ahmad in the previous books, and he was called Muhammad in the Holy Quran. That is because his Lord praised him before people praised him. Likewise in the Hereafter, his Lord will praise him, then He will grant him intercession, then the people will praise him. So he was singled out for the honour of the soorah of praise, the banner of praise, and the station of praise and glory (al-maqaam al-mahmoud) and it was prescribed for him to praise Allah after eating, after drinking, after offering supplication, and after returning from a journey; and his ummah has been called those who give praise. So all types of praise were combined for him (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)."(Fath al-Baari by Ibn Hajar 6/555)

Please see the following fatwa on our site for further information: 139531 .

And Allah knows best.