

Q&A

اسْمُ التَّفْضِيلِ فِي «اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ»

Question

السلام عليكم

Is the *takbiir* Allaahu 'Akbar a comparative or superlative?

As a teacher of Arabic said,

"The word 'Akbar is the comparative and not the superlative... it translates to *Allaah is Greater*. Allaah is greater than _____.

The purpose of the blank is a rhetorical function and part of the *balaaghah* of classical Arabic.

It is very commonly found in the Qur'aan where there is a statement that demands an object and that object is intentionally not provided and a blank is left for you.

The purpose of that blank is that you are supposed to fill in the blank for yourself with whatever it is that is distracting you from your *Salaah* at that moment."

Is this correct?

Answer

Our Shaykh Dr. V. Abdur Rahim حَفِظَهُ اللهُ replied (quote):

Dear Sister Umm Aaishah

وعليكم السلام

It is possible to use the comparative in the sense of the superlative as in the following example:

This is the *oldest* book in English. (*Superlative*)

This book is *older* than any other book in English. (*Comparative*)

As you can see, the meaning of both the constructions is the same.

In اللهُ أَكْبَرُ, the *meaning* is superlative.

In both comparative and superlative constructions, we have a مُفَضَّلٌ عَلَيْهِ, e.g.:

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْنَا مِنْ آبَائِنَا وَأُمَّهَاتِنَا
وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ. (Comparative)

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَحَبُّ النَّاسِ إِلَيْنَا. (Superlative)

In a construction like اللهُ أَكْبَرُ no مُفَضَّلٌ عَلَيْهِ can be used.

So it is left without a مُفَضَّلٌ عَلَيْهِ thus suggesting greatness which is absolute and uncomparable.

Hope this has helped you.

والسلام

abdur rahim

