The names of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam

Question: Copies of the 99 names of Allāh *taʿālā* are distributed among people and read by them. Similarly, copies of 99 names of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* are distributed and read by people. Is there any basis for the 99 names of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*? If there is, we notice that some of the qualities mentioned in them are reserved for Allāh *taʿālā* but are now being applied to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, e.g. al-Awwal, al-Ākhir and so on. In my humble opinion, this ought to be wrong because these are special attributes of Allāh *taʿālā*. Please clarify.

Answer: *Bukhārī Sharīf* contains the following:

[illegible] [1]

…Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: I have five names: I am Muhammad and Ahmad. I am al-Māhī through whom Allāh taʿālā wipes out kufr. I am al-Hāshir at whose feet people will be resurrected. And I am al-ʿĀqib [after whom there is no Prophet].

[illegible]

[illegible] :[2] [illegible].

Abū Mūsā radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam named himself to us. He said: I am Muhammad, Ahmad, al-Hāshir, al-Muqaffī, Nabī at-Taubah wa al-Malhamah…

[illegible] [3].

The following is stated in ʿ*Umdatul Qārī*:

[illegible]

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The book *al-Qaul al-Badīʿ fī as-Salāt ʿalā al-Habīb ash-Shafīʿ* (p. 174) mentions some Sufis who said that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* has 1 000 names while others say that he has 300. The author arranged them in alphabetical order, listing 428 names with their translation (it is left out here for the sake of brevity). It contains the name al-Ākhir and gives it the meaning: the one who came last from among all the Prophets. The name al-Awwal is translated as: the first one to bring the message of salvation. The author then says: According to one opinion, there are 430 names but the ʿulamā' only took those which are mentioned in the Ahādīth, and these are 99 in number.

In short, the names of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* are not restricted to 99 but number more than 400. In fact, up to 1 000 have been listed. However, only 99 have been taken so that there is some resemblance with the Asmā' Husnā. The vast majority of them – as regards their attributes – have been derived from the Qur'ān while others are mentioned in Ahādīth.

As for the objection about al-Awwal and al-Ākhir being the attributes of Allāh *taʿālā*, the reply to it is that their meanings differ depending on who they are applied to. They have a certain meaning when applied to Allāh *taʿālā* and a different meaning when applied to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. When al-Awwal is applied to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, it means that his blessed soul was the first to be created, or that his prophet-hood was announced before the prophet-hood of all other Prophets. Al-Ākhir means that he was the last Prophet to be commissioned. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

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[1] .[illegible] :[illegible] 1500 :[illegible]

[2] [illegible] 157 [illegible] 1156 :[illegible]
.[illegible]

[3] [illegible] 1160 :[illegible]
.[illegible]

[4] .[illegible] :[illegible] 11283 :[illegible]