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The Tafsīr of Sūrat Al-Fātiḥah (Chapter 1)

Which was revealed in Makkah

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
 الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝
 إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝ اهْدِنَا
 الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
 وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝

The Meaning of Al-Fātiḥah and its Various Names

This Sūrah is called *Al-Fātiḥah*, that is, the Opener of the Book, the Sūrah with which prayers are begun. It is also called, *Umm Al-Kitāb* (the Mother of the Book), according to the majority of the scholars. In an authentic *Ḥadīth* recorded by At-Tirmidhi, who graded it *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ أُمُّ الْقُرْآنِ وَأُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَالسَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ»

«Al-Ḥamdu lillāhi Rabbil-‘Ālamīn is the Mother of the Qur’ān, the Mother of the Book, and the seven repeated Ayāt of the Glorious Qur’ān.»

It is also called *Al-Ḥamd* and *Aṣ-Ṣalāh*, because the Prophet ﷺ said that his Lord said,

«قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ، فَإِذَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ،

قَالَ اللَّهُ: حَمِدَنِي عَبْدِي

‘The prayer (i.e., *Al-Fātiḥah*) is divided into two halves between Me and My servants.’ When the servant says, ‘All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of existence,’ Allāh says, ‘My servant has praised Me.’^[1]

Al-Fātiḥah was called the *Ṣalāh*, because reciting it is a condition for the correctness of *Ṣalāh* - the prayer. *Al-Fātiḥah* was also called *Ash-Shifā’* (the Cure).

It is also called *Ar-Ruqyah* (remedy), since in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, there is the narration of Abu Sa’īd telling the story of the Companion who used *Al-Fātiḥah* as a remedy for the tribal chief who was poisoned. Later, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said to a Companion,

«وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ أَنَّهَا رُقْيَةٌ»

‘How did you know that it is a *Ruqyah*?’^[2]

Al-Fātiḥah was revealed in Makkah as Ibn ‘Abbās, Qatādah and Abu Al-‘Āliyah stated. Allāh said,

﴿وَلَقَدْ مَلَأْنَاكَ سُبْحًا مِنَ الْمَنَانِ﴾

‘And indeed, We have bestowed upon you the seven *Mathānī*’ (seven repeatedly recited verses), (i.e. *Sūrat Al-Fātiḥah*) (15:87).^[3] Allāh knows best.

How many *Ayāt* does *Al-Fātiḥah* contain?

There is no disagreement over the view that *Al-Fātiḥah* contains seven *Ayāt*. According to the majority of the reciters of *Al-Kūfah*, a group of the Companions, the *Ṭābi‘īn*, and a number of scholars from the successive generations, the *Bismillāh* is a separate *Āyah* in its beginning. We will mention this subject again soon, if Allāh wills, and in Him we trust.

The Number of Words and Letters in *Al-Fātiḥah*

The scholars say that *Al-Fātiḥah* consists of twenty-five words, and that it contains one hundred and thirteen letters.

[1] At-Tirmidhi, *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 8:283.

[2] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 4:529.

[3] That is, because this *Āyah*, which refers to *Al-Fātiḥah*, was itself revealed in Makkah.

The Reason it is called *Umm Al-Kitāb*

In the beginning of the Book of *Tafsīr*, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Al-Bukhārī said; "It is called *Umm Al-Kitāb*, because the Qur'ān starts with it and because the prayer is started by reciting it."^[1] It was also said that it is called *Umm Al-Kitāb*, because it contains the meanings of the entire Qur'ān. Ibn Jarīr said, "The Arabs call every comprehensive matter that contains several specific areas an *Umm*. For instance, they call the skin that surrounds the brain, *Umm Ar-Ra's*. They also call the flag that gathers the ranks of the army an *Umm*." He also said, "Makkah was called *Umm Al-Qurā*, (the Mother of the Villages) because it is the grandest and the leader of all villages. It was also said that the earth was made starting from Makkah."^[2]

Further, Imām Aḥmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah narrated about *Umm Al-Qur'ān* that the Prophet ﷺ said,

«هِيَ أُمُّ الْقُرْآنِ وَهِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَهِيَ الْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ»

«It is *Umm Al-Qur'ān*, the seven repeated (verses) and the Glorious Qur'ān.»^[3]

Also, Abu Ja'far, Muḥammad bin Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabari recorded Abu Hurayrah saying that the Messenger of Allāh said about *Al-Fātiḥah*,

«هِيَ أُمُّ الْقُرْآنِ وَهِيَ فَاتِحَةُ الْكِتَابِ وَهِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي»

«It is *Umm Al-Qur'ān*, *Al-Fātiḥah* of the Book (the Opener of the Qur'ān) and the seven repeated (verses).»^[4]

Virtues of *Al-Fātiḥah*

Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal recorded in the *Musnad* that Abu Sa'īd bin Al-Mu'allā said, "I was praying when the Prophet ﷺ called me, so I did not answer him until I finished the prayer. I then went to him and he said, «What prevented you from coming?» I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh ! I was praying.' He said, «'Didn't Allāh say»,

[1] *Faṭḥ Al-Bāri* 8:6.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 1:107.

[3] Aḥmad 2:448.

[4] Aṭ-Ṭabari 1:107.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ﴾

«O you who believe! Answer Allāh (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he (ﷺ) calls you to that which gives you life?»

He ﷺ then said,

«لَأُعَلِّمَنَّكَ أَكْثَرَ سُورَةٍ فِي الْقُرْآنِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَخْرُجَ مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ»

«I will teach you the greatest Sūrah in the Qur'ān before you leave the Masjid.» He held my hand and when he was about to leave the Masjid, I said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! You said: I will teach you the greatest Sūrah in the Qur'ān.' He said, «Yes.»

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

«Al-Hamdu lillāhi Rabbil-'Ālamīn»

«نَعَمْ هِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ الَّذِي أُوتِيَتْهُ»

«It is the seven repeated (verses) and the Glorious Qur'ān that I was given.»^[1]

Al-Bukhāri,^[2] Abu Dāwud, An-Nasā'ī and Ibn Majah^[3] also recorded this Ḥadīth.

Also, Imām Aḥmad recorded that Abu Hurayrah said, "The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ went out while Ubayy bin Ka'b was praying and said, «O Ubayy!» Ubayy did not answer him. The Prophet ﷺ said, «O Ubayy!» Ubayy prayed faster then went to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saying, 'Peace be unto you, O Messenger of Allāh!' He said, «Peace be unto you. O Ubayy, what prevented you from answering me when I called you?» He said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! I was praying.' He said, «Did you not read among what Allāh has sent down to me,»

﴿اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ﴾

«Answer Allāh (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he (ﷺ) calls you to that which gives you life?»

He said, 'Yes, O Messenger of Allāh! I will not do it again.' the Prophet ﷺ said,

[1] Aḥmad 4:211.

[2] Faṭḥ Al-Bāri 8:6, 271.

[3] Abu Dāwud 2:150, An-Nasā'ī 2:139, and Ibn Mājah 2:1244.

«أَتُحِبُّ أَنْ أَعْلَمَكَ سُورَةً لَمْ تَنْزِلْ لَهَا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَلَا فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ وَلَا فِي الزَّبُورِ وَلَا فِي الْفُرْقَانِ مِثْلَهَا؟»

«Would you like me to teach you a Sūrah the likes of which nothing has been revealed in the Tawrah, the Injil, the Zabūr (Psalms) or the Furqān (the Qur'ān)?»

He said, 'Yes, O Messenger of Allāh!' The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, «I hope that I will not leave through this door until you have learned it.» He (Ka'b) said, The Messenger of Allāh held my hand while speaking to me. Meanwhile I was slowing down fearing that he might reach the door before he finished his conversation. When we came close to the door, I said: O Messenger of Allāh ! What is the Sūrah that you have promised to teach me?' He said, «What do you read in the prayer.» Ubayy said, 'So I recited Umm Al-Qur'ān to him.' He ﷺ said,

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَلَا فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ وَلَا فِي الزَّبُورِ وَلَا فِي الْفُرْقَانِ مِثْلَهَا إِلَّا السَّبْعَ الْمَثَانِي»

«By Him in Whose Hand is my soul! Allāh has never revealed in the Tawrah, the Injil, the Zabūr or the Furqān a Sūrah like it. It is the seven repeated verses that I was given.»²

Also, At-Tirmidhi recorded this Ḥadīth and in his narration, the Prophet ﷺ said,

«إِنَّهَا مِنَ السَّبْعِ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ الَّذِي أُعْطِيَتْهُ»

«It is the seven repeated verses and the Glorious Qur'ān that I was given.» At-Tirmidhi then commented that this Ḥadīth is Ḥasan Ṣaḥīḥ.^[1]

There is a similar Ḥadīth on this subject narrated from Anas bin Mālik.^[2] Further, 'Abdullāh, the son of Imām Aḥmad, recorded this Ḥadīth from Abu Hurayrah from Ubayy bin Ka'b, and he mentioned a longer but similar wording for the above Ḥadīth.^[3] In addition, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasā'ī recorded this Ḥadīth from Abu Hurayrah from Ubayy bin Ka'b who said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

[1] Aḥmad 2:412, Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī 8:283.

[2] Al-Ḥākim 1:560.

[3] Aḥmad 2:357 and 5:114.

«مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَلَا فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ مِثْلُ أَمِّ الْقُرْآنِ وَهِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَهِيَ
مَقْسُومَةٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نَضْفَيْنِ»

«Allāh has never revealed in the Tawrah or the Injil anything similar to Umm Al-Qur'ān. It is the seven repeated verses and it is divided into two halves between Allāh and His servant.»

This is the wording reported by An-Nasā'ī. At-Tirmidhi said that this Ḥadīth is Ḥasan Gharīb.^[1]

Also, Imām Aḥmad recorded that Ibn Jābir said, "I went to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ after he had poured water (for purification) and said, 'Peace be unto you, O Messenger of Allāh!' He did not answer me. So I said again, 'Peace be unto you, O Messenger of Allāh!' Again, he did not answer me, so I said again, 'Peace be unto you, O Messenger of Allāh!' Still he did not answer me. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ went while I was following him, until he arrived at his residence. I went to the Masjid and sat there sad and depressed. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ came out after he performed his purification and said, 'Peace and Allāh's mercy be unto you, peace and Allāh's mercy be unto you, peace and Allāh's mercy be unto you.' He then said, 'O 'Abdullāh bin Jābir! Should I inform you of the best Sūrah in the Qur'ān?' I said, 'Yes, O Messenger of Allāh!' He said, 'Read, 'All praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the existence,' until you finish it.'"^[2] This Ḥadīth has a good chain of narrators.

Some scholars relied on this Ḥadīth as evidence that some Ayāt and Sūrahs have more virtues than others.

Furthermore, in the chapter about the virtues of the Qur'ān, Al-Bukhārī recorded that Abu Sa'īd Al-Khudrī said, "Once, we were on a journey when a female servant came and said, 'The leader of this area has been poisoned and our people are away. Is there a healer among you?' Then a man whose healing expertise did not interest us stood for her, he read a Ruqyah for him, and he was healed. The chief gave him thirty sheep as a gift and some milk. When he came back to us we said to him, 'You know of a (new) Ruqyah, or did you do this before?' He said, 'I only used Umm Al-Kitāb as Ruqyah.' We

[1] Tuhfat Al-Aḥwadhī 8:553 and An-Nasā'ī in Al-Kubrā 1:318.

[2] Aḥmad 4:177 and Al-Muwatta' 1:84.

said, 'Do not do anything further until we ask the Messenger of Allāh.' When we went back to Al-Madīnah we mentioned what had happened to the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ said,

«وَمَا كَانَ يُذَرِّيه أَنَّهَا رُقِيَّةٌ أَفْسِمُوا وَاضْرِبُوا لِي بِسَنَمٍ»

«Who told him that it is a Ruqyah? Divide (the sheep) and reserve a share for me.»^[1]

Also, Muslim recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and An-Nasā'ī in his *Sunan* that Ibn 'Abbās said, "While Jibrīl (Gabriel) was with the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, he heard a noise from above. Jibrīl lifted his sight to the sky and said, 'This is a door in heaven being open, and it has never been opened before now.' An angel descended from that door and came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, 'Receive the glad tidings of two lights that you have been given, which no other Prophet before you was given: the Opening of the Book and the last (three) *Ayāt* of *Sūrat Al-Baqarah*. You will not read a letter of them, but will gain its benefit.' " This is the wording collected by An-Nasā'ī (*Al-Kubrā* 5:12) and Muslim recorded similar wording (1:554).

Al-Fātiḥah and the Prayer

Muslim recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Prophet ﷺ said,

«مَنْ صَلَّى صَلَاةً لَمْ يَقْرَأْ فِيهَا أُمَّ الْقُرْآنِ فَهِيَ خِدَاجٌ ثَلَاثًا غَيْرَ تَمَامٍ»

«Whoever performs any prayer in which he did not read Umm Al-Qur'ān, then his prayer is incomplete.» He said it thrice.

Abu Hurayrah was asked, "[When] we stand behind the Imām?" He said, "Read it to yourself, for I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say,

« قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نَضْفَيْنِ وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ فَإِذَا قَالَ: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، قَالَ اللَّهُ: حَمِدَنِي عَبْدِي وَإِذَا قَالَ: الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ، قَالَ اللَّهُ: أَثْنَى عَلَيَّ عَبْدِي، فَإِذَا قَالَ: مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ، قَالَ اللَّهُ: مَجَّدَنِي عَبْدِي وَقَالَ مَرَّةً: فَوَضَّ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي فَإِذَا قَالَ: إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ، قَالَ: هَذَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ، فَإِذَا قَالَ: أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ

[1] *Fath Al-Bāri* 8:671.

الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صَرَفَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ، قَالَ
الله: هَذَا لِعَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ

‘Allāh, the Exalted, said, ‘I have divided the prayer (Al-Fātiḥah) into two halves between Myself and My servant, and My servant shall have what he asks for.’

If he says,

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

﴿All praise and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of existence.﴾

Allāh says, ‘My servant has praised Me.’ When the servant says,

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

﴿The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.﴾

Allāh says, ‘My servant has glorified Me.’ When he says,

﴿مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ﴾

﴿The Owner of the Day of Recompense.﴾

Allāh says, ‘My servant has glorified Me,’ or ‘My servant has related all matters to Me.’ When he says,

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

﴿You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.﴾

Allāh says, ‘This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he sought.’ When he says,

﴿اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صَرَفَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾

﴿Guide us to the straight path. The way of those on whom You have granted Your grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray﴾,

Allāh says, ‘This is for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he asked for.’”

These are the words of An-Nasā’ī, while both Muslim and An-Nasā’ī collected the following wording, “A half of it is for Me and a half for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what

he asked for.”^[1]

Explaining this Ḥadīth

The last Ḥadīth used the word [Ṣalāh] ‘prayer’ in reference to reciting the Qur’ān, (Al-Fātiḥah in this case) just as Allāh said in another Āyah,

﴿وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافُهَا وَأَتَّبِعْ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا﴾

﴿And offer your Ṣalāh (prayer) neither aloud nor in a low voice, but follow a way between.﴾

meaning, with your recitation of the Qur’ān, as the Ṣaḥīḥ related from Ibn ‘Abbās.^[2] Also, in the last Ḥadīth, Allāh said, “I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves, a half for Me and a half for My servant. My servant shall have what he asked for.” Allāh next explained the division that involves reciting Al-Fātiḥah, demonstrating the importance of reciting the Qur’ān during the prayer, which is one of the prayer’s greatest pillars. Hence, the word ‘prayer’ was used here although only a part of it was actually being referred to, that is, reciting the Qur’ān. Similarly, the word ‘recite’ was used where prayer is meant, as demonstrated by Allāh’s statement,

﴿وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا﴾

﴿And recite the Qur’ān in the early dawn. Verily, the recitation of the Qur’ān in the early dawn is ever witnessed.﴾ in reference to the Fajr prayer. The Two Ṣaḥīḥs recorded that the angels of the night and the day attend this prayer.^[3]

Reciting Al-Fātiḥah is required in Every Rak‘ah of the Prayer

All of these facts testify to the requirement that reciting the Qur’ān (Al-Fātiḥah) in the prayer is required, and there is a consensus between the scholars on this ruling. The Ḥadīth that we mentioned also testifies to this fact, for the Prophet ﷺ said,

[1] Muslim 1:296, and An-Nasā’i in Al-Kubrā 5:11,12.

[2] Faṭḥ Al-Bāri 8:257

[3] Faṭḥ Al-Bāri 8:251 and Muslim 1:439.

«مَنْ صَلَّى صَلَاةً لَمْ يَقْرَأْ فِيهَا بِأَمِّ الْقُرْآنِ فَهِيَ خِدَاجٌ»

«Whoever performs any prayer in which he did not recite Umm Al-Qur'ān, his prayer is incomplete.»^[1]

Also, the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* recorded that 'Ubādah bin Aṣ-Ṣāmit said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ»

«There is no prayer for whoever does not recite the Opening of the Book.»^[2]

Also, the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Ḥibbān recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«لَا تُجْزَى صَلَاةٌ لَا يَقْرَأُ فِيهَا بِأَمِّ الْقُرْآنِ»

«The prayer during which Umm Al-Qur'ān is not recited is invalid.»^[3]

There are many other *Ḥadīths* on this subject. Therefore, reciting the Opening of the Book, during the prayer by the Imām and those praying behind him, is required in every prayer, and in every *Rak'ah*.

The Tafsīr of Isti'ādah (seeking Refuge)

Allāh said,

﴿خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ۝ وَإِنَّا نَبْزُغُكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝﴾

«Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and stay away from the foolish (i.e. don't punish them). And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shayṭān (Satan), then seek refuge with Allāh. Verily, He is Hearing, Knowing» (7:199-200),

﴿ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ ۝ وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۝ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ ۝﴾

«Repel evil with that which is better. We are Best-Acquainted

[1] Aḥmad 2 :250.

[2] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 2 :276 and Muslim 1 :295.

[3] Ibn Khuzaymah 1 :248, and Ibn Ḥibbān 3 :139.

with things they utter. And say: "My Lord! I seek refuge with You from the whisperings (suggestions) of the Shayātīn (devils). And I seek refuge with You, My Lord! lest they should come near me." ﴿ (23:96-98) and,

﴿ادْفَعْ بِالَّذِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمَا يُلْقِنَهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقِنَهَا إِلَّا دُوْرٌ حَقِيظٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَإِنَّمَا يَرْتَفِئُكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾

﴿Repel (an evil) with one which is better, then verily he with whom there was enmity between you, (will become) as though he was a close friend. But none is granted it except those who are patient – and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion (of happiness in the Hereafter, i.e. Paradise and of a high moral character) in this world. And if an evil whisper from Shayṭān tries to turn you away (O Muḥammad ﷺ) (from doing good), then seek refuge in Allāh. Verily, He is the Hearing, the Knowing.﴾ (41:34-36)

These are the only three Ayāt that carry this meaning. Allāh commanded that we be lenient human enemy, so that his soft nature might make him an ally and a supporter. He also commanded that we seek refuge from the satanic enemy, because the devil does not relent in his enmity if we treat him with kindness and leniency. The devil only seeks the destruction of the Son of Ādam due to the vicious enmity and hatred he has always had towards man's father, Ādam. Allāh said,

﴿يَبْنَیْ ءَادَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ كَمَا أَخْرَجَ أَبَوَيْكُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ﴾

﴿O Children of Ādam! Let not Shayṭān deceive you, as he got your parents [Ādam and Hawwā' (Eve)] out of Paradise﴾ (7:27),

﴿إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوْهُ عَدُوًّا إِنَّمَا يَدْعُو حِزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ﴾

﴿Surely, Shayṭān is an enemy to you, so take (treat) him as an enemy. He only invites his Ḥizb (followers) that they may become the dwellers of the blazing Fire﴾ (35:6) and,

﴿فَاتَّخِذُوْهُ وِدْرِيْتهٖ أُوْلَئِكَ مِنْ دُوْرِ وَهُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ بِئْسَ لِلظَّالِمِيْنَ بَدَلًا﴾

﴿Will you then take him (Iblis) and his offspring as protectors and helpers rather than Me while they are enemies to you? What an evil is the exchange for the Zālimūn (polytheists, and wrongdoers, etc)﴾ (18:50).

The devil assured Ādam that he wanted to advise him, but he was lying. Hence, how would he treat us after he had vowed,

﴿يَمُرُّ بِكَ لَأَعُوذَنَّهُمْ أَتَمَّيْنِ ﴿٨١﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾﴾

﴿"By Your might, then I will surely, mislead them all. Except Your chosen servants among them (i.e. faithful, obedient, true believers of Islāmic Monotheism)."﴾ (38:82-83)

Also, Allāh said,

﴿إِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿١٠٠﴾ إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مَأْمُورٌ وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ إِنَّمَا سُلْطَانُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَكُونُوا مَشْرُكُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾﴾

﴿So when you [want to] recite the Qur'ān, seek refuge with Allāh from Shayṭān, the outcast (the cursed one). Verily, he has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord (Allāh). His power is only over those who obey and follow him (Satan), and those who join partners with Him.﴾ (16:98-100).

Seeking Refuge before reciting the Qur'ān

Allāh said,

﴿إِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿١٠٠﴾﴾

﴿So when you [want to] recite the Qur'ān, seek refuge with Allāh from Shayṭān, the outcast (the cursed one).﴾

meaning, before you recite the Qur'ān. Similarly, Allāh said,

﴿إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ﴾

﴿When you intend to offer Aṣ-Ṣalāh (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms)﴾ (5:6)

meaning, before you stand in prayer, as evident by the *Hadīths* that we mentioned. Imām Aḥmad recorded that Abu Sa'īd Al-Khudri said, "When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would

stand up in prayer at night, he would start his prayer with the *Takbīr* (saying "Allāhu Akbar"; Allāh is Greater) and would then supplicate,

«سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ»

«All praise is due to You, O Allāh, and also the thanks. Blessed be Your Name, Exalted be Your sovereignty, and there is no deity worthy of worship except You.»

He ﷺ would then say thrice,

«لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ» ثَلَاثًا

«There is no deity worthy of worship except Allāh.»

He ﷺ would then say,

«أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ مِنْ هَمْزِهِ وَنَفْخِهِ وَنَفْثِهِ»

«I seek refuge with Allāh, the Hearing, the Knowing, from the cursed Satan, from his coercion, lures to arrogance and poems.»

The four collectors of the *Sunan* recorded this *Ḥadīth*, which At-Tirmidhi considered the most famous *Ḥadīth* on this subject.^[1]

Abu Dāwud and Ibn Mājah recorded that Jubayr bin Muṭ'im said that his father said, "When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ started the prayer, he said,

«اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ كَثِيرًا - ثَلَاثًا - الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَثِيرًا - ثَلَاثًا - سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا - ثَلَاثًا - اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ مِنْ هَمْزِهِ وَنَفْخِهِ وَنَفْثِهِ»

«Allāh is the Greater, truly the Greatest (thrice); all praise is due to Allāh always (thrice); and all praise is due to Allāh day and night (thrice). O Allāh! I seek refuge with You from the cursed Satan, from his Hamz, Nafkh and Nafth.»

'Amr said, "The *Hamz* means asphyxiation, the *Nafkh* means arrogance, and the *Nafth* means poetry."^[2] Also, Ibn Mājah recorded that 'Alī bin Al-Mundhir said that Ibn Fuḍayl narrated that 'Aṭā' bin As-Sā'ib said that Abu 'Abdur-Raḥmān

[1] Aḥmad 3:69, Abu Dāwud 1:490, *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhi* 2:47, An-Nasā'i 2:132, and Ibn Mājah.

[2] Abu Dāwud 1:486 and Ibn Mājah 1:265.

As-Sulami said that Ibn Mas'ūd said that the Prophet ﷺ said,

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ وَهَمْزِهِ وَنَفْخِهِ وَنَفْثِهِ»

«O Allāh! I seek refuge with You from the cursed devil, from his Hamz, Nafkh and Nafth.»

He said, "The *Hamz* means death, the *Nafkh* means arrogance, and the *Nafth* means poetry."^[1]

Seeking Refuge with Allāh when One is Angry

In his *Musnad*, Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abu Ya'lā Aḥmad bin 'Alī bin Al-Muthannā Al-Mawṣili reported that Ubayy bin Ka'b said, "Two men disputed with each other in the presence of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ and the nose of one of them became swollen because of extreme anger. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«إِنِّي لَأَعْلَمُ شَيْئًا لَوْ قَالَ لَذَهَبَ عَنْهُ مَا يَجِدُ: أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ»

«I know of some words that if he said them, what he feels will go away, 'I seek refuge with Allāh from the cursed Satan.'»

An-Nasā'ī also recorded this Ḥadīth in his book, *Al-Yawm wal-Laylah*.^[2]

Al-Bukhārī recorded that Sulaymān bin Ṣurad said, "Two men disputed in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ while we were sitting with him. One of them was cursing the other fellow and his face turned red due to anger. The Prophet ﷺ said,

«إِنِّي لَأَعْلَمُ كَلِمَةً لَوْ قَالَهَا لَذَهَبَ عَنْهُ مَا يَجِدُ، لَوْ قَالَ: أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ

الرَّجِيمِ»

«I know of a statement which if he said it, will make what he feels disappear, 'I seek refuge with Allāh from the cursed Satan.'»

They said to the man, 'Do you not hear what the Messenger of Allāh is saying?' He said, 'I am not insane.'" Also, Muslim, Abu Dāwud and An-Nasā'ī recorded this Ḥadīth.^[3]

[1] Ibn Mājah 1:266.

[2] An-Nasā'ī in *Al-Kubrā*, no. 10233.

[3] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 6:388, Muslim 4:2015, Abu Dāwud 5:140 and An-Nasā'ī in *Al-Kubrā*.

There are many other *Ḥadīths* about seeking refuge with Allāh. One can find this subject in the books on supplication and the virtues of righteous, good deeds.

Is the *Isti'ādhah* (seeking Refuge) required?

The majority of the scholars state that reciting the *Isti'ādhah* (in the prayer and when reciting the Qur'ān) is recommended and not required, and therefore, not reciting it does not constitute a sin. However, Ar-Rāzi recorded that 'Aṭā' bin Abi Rabāḥ said that the *Isti'ādhah* is required in the prayer and when one reads the Qur'ān. In support of 'Aṭā's statement, Ar-Rāzi relied upon the apparent meaning of the *Āyah*,

﴿فَاسْتَوِذْ﴾

﴿Then seek refuge.﴾

He said that the *Āyah* contains a command that requires implementation. Also, the Prophet ﷺ always said the *Isti'ādhah*. In addition, the *Isti'ādhah* wards off the evil of Satan, which is necessary, the rule is that the means needed to implement a requirement of the religion is itself also required. And when one says, "I seek refuge with Allāh from the cursed devil." Then this will suffice.

Virtues of the *Isti'ādhah*

The *Isti'ādhah* cleanses the mouth from the foul speech that it has indulged in. It also purifies the mouth and prepares it to recite the speech of Allāh. Further, the *Isti'ādhah* entails seeking Allāh's help and acknowledging His ability to do everything. The *Isti'ādhah* also affirms the servant's meekness, weakness and inability to face the enemy of his inner evil, whom Allāh alone, Who created this enemy, is able to repel and defeat. This enemy does not accept kindness, unlike the human enemy. There are three *Āyāt* in the Qur'ān that affirm this fact. Also, Allāh said,

﴿إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ وَكِيلًا﴾

﴿Verily, My servants (i.e. the true believers of Islāmic Monotheism) – you have no authority over them. And sufficient is your Lord as a Guardian.﴾ (17:65).

We should state here that the believers, whom the human

enemies kill, become martyrs, while those who fall victim to the inner enemy - Satan - become bandits. Further, the believers who are defeated by the apparent enemy - disbelievers - gain a reward, while those defeated by the inner enemy earn a sin and become misguided. Since Satan sees man where man cannot see him, it is befitting that the believers seek refuge from Satan with Whom Satan cannot see. The *Isti'adhah* is a form of drawing closer to Allāh and seeking refuge with Him from the evil of every evil creature.

What does *Isti'adhah* mean?

Isti'adhah means, "I seek refuge with Allāh from the cursed Satan so that he is prevented from affecting my religious or worldly affairs, or hindering me from adhering to what I was commanded, or luring me into what I was prohibited from." Indeed, only Allāh is able to prevent the evil of Satan from touching the son of Ādam. This is why Allāh allowed us to be lenient and kind with the human devil, so that his soft nature might cause him to refrain from the evil he is indulging in. However, Allāh required us to seek refuge with Him from the evil of Satan, because he neither accepts bribes nor does kindness affect him, for he is pure evil. Thus, only He Who created Satan is able to stop his evil. This meaning is reiterated in only three Āyāt in the Qur'ān. Allāh said in *Sūrat Al-A'rāf*,

﴿خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ﴾

﴿Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish (i.e. don't punish them).﴾ (7:199)

This is about dealing with human beings. He then said in the same *Sūrah*,

﴿وَإِنَّمَا يَنزَغُكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ﴾

﴿And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shayṭān, then seek refuge with Allāh. Verily, He is Hearing, Knowing (7: 200).﴾

Allāh also said in *Sūrat Al-Mu'minūn*,

﴿ادْفَعْ بِالَّذِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّبِيحَةِ مِمَّا أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ﴾

﴿وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ﴾

﴿Repel evil with that which is better. We are Best-Acquainted with the things they utter. And say: "My Lord! I seek refuge with You from the whisperings (suggestions) of the Shayātīn (devils). And I seek refuge with You, My Lord! lest they should come near me." (23:96-98).﴾

Further, Allāh said in Sūrat As-Sajdah,

﴿وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا الْمَسْكَنَةَ وَلَا الْكِبْرِيَاءَ أَدْفَعْ بِالَّذِي فِي أَحْسَنِ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ
وَرِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ ۚ وَمَا يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا الذِّبْنَ صَبْرًا وَمَا يُلْقِيهَا إِلَّا دُرٌّ حَظِيظٌ عَظِيمٌ ۚ وَإِنَّا
بِرَّعْنِكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزَعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۚ﴾

﴿The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better, then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend. But none is granted it (the above quality) except those who are patient – and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion (of happiness in the Hereafter, i.e. Paradise and of a high moral character) in this world. And if an evil whisper from Shaytān tries to turn you away (from doing good), then seek refuge in Allāh. Verily, He is the Hearing, the Knowing﴾ (41:34-36).

Why the Devil is called Shaytān

In the Arabic language, Shaytān is derived from Shaṭana, which means the far thing. Hence, the Shaytān has a different nature than mankind, and his sinful ways are far away from every type of righteousness. It was also said that Shaytān is derived from Shāṭa, (literally 'burned'), because it was created from fire. Some scholars said that both meanings are correct, although they state that the first meaning is more plausible. Further, Siyawayh (the renowned Arab linguistic) said, "The Arabs say, 'So-and-so has Tashaytan,' when he commits the act of the devils. If Shaytān was derived from Shāṭa, they would have said, Tashayyāṭa (rather than Tashaytan)." Hence, Shaytān is derived from the word that means, far away. This is why they call those who are rebellious (or mischievous) from among the Jinns and mankind a 'Shaytān'. Allāh said,

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيْطَانِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ
غُرُورًا﴾

﴿And so We have appointed for every Prophet enemies – Shayātīn (devils) among mankind and Jinn, inspiring one another with adorned speech as a delusion (or by way of deception)﴾ (6:112).

In addition, the *Musnad* by Imām Aḥmad records that Abu Dharr said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«يَا أَبَا ذَرٍّ تَعَوَّذْ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شَيَاطِينِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ»

«O Abu Dharr! Seek refuge with Allāh from the devils of mankind and the Jinns.»

Abu Dharr said, “I asked him ﷺ, ‘Are there human devils?’ He said, «Yes.»^[1] Furthermore, it is recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* that Abu Dharr said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«يَقْطَعُ الصَّلَاةَ الْمَرْأَةُ وَالْحِمَارُ وَالْكَلْبُ الْأَسْوَدُ»

«The woman, the donkey and the black dog interrupt the prayer (if they pass in front of those who do not pray behind a Sutraḥ, i.e. a barrier).»

Abu Dharr said, “I said, ‘What is the difference between the black dog and the red or yellow dog?’ He said,

«الْكَلْبُ الْأَسْوَدُ شَيْطَانٌ»

«The black dog is a devil.»^[2]

Also, Ibn Jarīr Aṭ-Ṭabari recorded that ‘Umar bin Al-Khaṭṭāb once rode a *Berthawn* (huge camel) which started to proceed arrogantly. ‘Umar kept striking the animal, but the animal kept walking in an arrogant manner. ‘Umar dismounted the animal and said, “By Allāh! You have carried me on a *Shayṭān*. I did not come down from it until after I had felt something strange in my heart.” This *Ḥadīth* has an authentic chain of narrators.^[3]

The Meaning of *Ar-Rajīm*

Ar-Rajīm means, being expelled from all types of righteousness. Allāh said,

[1] Aḥmad 5:178.

[2] Muslim 1:365.

[3] Aṭ-Ṭabari 1:111.

﴿وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصْنِيعٍ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ﴾

﴿And indeed We have adorned the nearest heaven with lamps, and We have made such lamps Rujuman (as missiles) to drive away the Shayṭāṭin (devils)﴾ (67:5).

Allāh also said,

﴿إِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِزِينَةِ الْكَوْكَبِ ۖ وَحِفْظًا مِن كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّارِدٍ ۖ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ إِلَى الْآلِ الْأَعْلَىٰ وَيَقْدِرُونَ مِن كُلِّ جَانِبٍ ۖ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ وَاصِبٌ ۚ إِلَّا مَن حَظِيَ لِقَافِلَةٍ فَلَا يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَايَةُ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَانَ أَبَاسٌ يُنَادُّهُمْ سَعًى ۚ﴾

﴿Verily, We have adorned the near heaven with the stars (for beauty). And to guard against every rebellious devil. They cannot listen to the higher group (angels) for they are pelted from every side. Outcast, and theirs is a constant (or painful) torment. Except such as snatch away something by stealing, and they are pursued by a flaming fire of piercing brightness﴾ (37:6-10).

Further, Allāh said,

﴿وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ ۚ وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَّجِيمٍ ۚ إِلَّا مَن أَسْرَقَ النَّعْمَ فَأَتَعَمَّهُ شِهَابٌ ثُجِيثٌ ۚ﴾

﴿And indeed, We have put the big stars in the heaven and We beautified it for the beholders. And We have guarded it (near heaven) from every Shayṭān Rajīm (outcast Shayṭān). Except him (devil) who steals the hearing then he is pursued by a clear flaming fire.﴾ (15:16-18).

There are several similar Āyāt. It was also said that Rajīm means, the person who throws or bombards things, because the devil throws doubts and evil thoughts in people's hearts. The first meaning is more popular and accurate.

Bismillāh is the First Āyah of Al-Fātiḥah

The Companions started the Book of Allāh with Bismillāh:

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾

﴿1. In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.﴾

The scholars also agree that Bismillāh is a part of an Āyah

in *Sūrat An-Naml* (chapter 27). They disagree over whether it is a separate *Āyah* before every *Sūrah*, or if it is an *Āyah*, or a part of an *Āyah*, included in every *Sūrah* where the *Bismillāh* appears in its beginning. Ad-Dāraquṭnī also recorded a *Ḥadīth* from Abu Hurayrah from the Prophet ﷺ that supports this *Ḥadīth* by Ibn Khuzaymah. Also, similar statements were attributed to 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and others.^[1]

The opinion that *Bismillāh* is an *Āyah* of every *Sūrah*, except *Al-Barā'ah* (chapter 9), was attributed to (the Companions) Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn Az-Zubayr, Abu Hurayrah and 'Alī. This opinion was also attributed to the *Tābi'īn*: 'Aṭā', Ṭawūs, Sa'īd bin Jubayr, Makḥūl and Az-Zuhri. This is also the view of 'Abdullāh bin Al-Mubārak, Ash-Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, (in one report from him) Ishāq bin Rāhwayh and Abu 'Ubayd Al-Qāsim bin Salām. On the other hand, Mālik, Abu Ḥanīfah and their followers said that *Bismillāh* is not an *Āyah* in *Al-Fātiḥah* or any other *Sūrah*. Dāwud said that it is a separate *Āyah* in the beginning of every *Sūrah*, not part of the *Sūrah* itself, and this opinion was also attributed to Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal.

***Basmalah* aloud in the Prayer**

As for *Basmalah* aloud during the prayer, those who did not agree that it is a part of *Al-Fātiḥah*, state that the *Basmalah* should not be aloud. The scholars who stated that *Bismillāh* is a part of every *Sūrah* (except chapter 9) had different opinions; some of them, such as Ash-Shāfi'ī, said that one should recite *Bismillāh* with *Al-Fātiḥah* aloud. This is also the opinion of many among the Companions, the *Tābi'īn* and the Imāms of Muslims from the Salaf and the later generations. For instance, this is the opinion of Abu Hurayrah, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Mu'āwiyah, 'Umar and 'Alī - according to Ibn 'Abdūl-Barr and Al-Bayḥaqī. Also, the Four Khalīfahs - as Al-Khaṭīb reported - were said to have held this view although the report from them is contradicted. The *Tābi'īn* scholars who gave this *Tafsīr* include Sa'īd bin Jubayr, Ikrimah, Abu Qilābah, Az-Zuhri, 'Alī bin Al-Ḥasan, his son Muḥammad, Sa'īd bin Al-Musayyib, 'Aṭā', Ṭawūs, Mujāhid, Sālim, Muḥammad bin Ka'b

[1] Ad-Dāraquṭnī 1:303 and 306.

Al-Quraḏī, Abu Bakr bin Muḥammad bin ‘Amr bin Ḥazm, Abu Wā’il, Ibn Sīrīn, Muḥammad bin Al-Munkadir, ‘Alī bin ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abbās, his son Muḥammad, Nāfi’ the freed slave of Ibn ‘Umar, Zayd bin Aslam, ‘Umar bin ‘Abdul-Azīz, Al-Azraq bin Qays, Ḥabīb bin Abi Thābit, Abu Ash-Sha’tḥā, Makḥūl and ‘Abdullāh bin Ma’qil bin Muqarrin. Also, Al-Bayhaqī added ‘Abdullāh bin Ṣafwān, and Muḥammad bin Al-Ḥanafīyyah to this list. In addition, Ibn ‘Abdul-Barr added ‘Amr bin Dīnār.

The proof that these scholars relied on is that, since *Bismillāh* is a part of *Al-Fātiḥah*, it should be recited aloud like the rest of *Al-Fātiḥah*. Also, An-Nasā’ī recorded in his *Sunan*, Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn Khuzaymah in their *Ṣaḥīḥs* and Al-Ḥākim in the *Mustadrak*, that Abu Hurayrah once performed the prayer and recited *Bismillāh* aloud. After he finished the prayer, he said, “Among you, I perform the prayer that is the closest to the prayer of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ.” Ad-Dāraquṭnī, Al-Khaṭīb and Al-Bayhaqī graded this *Ḥadīth Ṣaḥīḥ*^[1] Furthermore, in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī* it is recorded that Anas bin Mālik was asked about the recitation of the Prophet ﷺ. He said, “His recitation was unhurried.” He then demonstrated that and recited, while lengthening the recitation of *Bismillāh Ar-Raḥmān Ar-Raḥīm*,^[2] Also, in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad, the *Sunan* of Abu Dāwud, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān and the *Mustadrak* of Al-Ḥākim - it is recorded that Umm Salamah said, “The Messenger of Allāh used to distinguish each *Āyah* during his recitation,

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾ الرَّحْمَنِ
الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾

﴿In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. The Owner of the Day of Recompense.﴾”

Ad-Dāraquṭnī graded the chain of narration for this *Ḥadīth*

[1] An-Nasā’ī 2:134, Ibn Khuzaymah 1:251, Ibn Ḥibbān 3:143, Al-Ḥākim 1:232, Ad-Dāraquṭnī 1:305, Al-Khaṭīb and Al-Bayhaqī 2:46.

[2] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 8:709.

Ṣaḥīḥ^[1] Furthermore, Imām Abu ‘Abdullāh Ash-Shāfi‘ī and Al-Ḥākim in his *Mustadrak*, recorded that Mu‘āwiyah led the prayer in Al-Madīnah and did not recite the *Bismillāh*. The Muḥājirin who were present at that prayer criticized that. When Mu‘āwiyah led the following prayer, he recited the *Bismillāh* aloud.^[2]

The *Ḥadīths* mentioned above provide sufficient proof for the opinion that the *Bismillāh* is recited aloud. As for the opposing evidences and the scientific analysis of the narrations mentioned their weaknesses or otherwise it is not our desire to discuss this subject at this time.

Other scholars stated that the *Bismillāh* should not be recited aloud in the prayer, and this is the established practice of the Four Khalīfahs, as well as ‘Abdullāh bin Mughaffal and several scholars among the *Tābi‘īn* and later generations. It is also the *Madhhab* (view) of Abu Ḥanīfah, Ath-Thawri and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal.

Imām Mālik stated that the *Bismillāh* is not recited aloud or silently. This group based their view upon what Imām Muslim recorded that ‘Ā’ishah said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to start the prayer by reciting the *Takbīr* (*Allāhu Akbar*; Allāh is Greater) and then recite,

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

﴿All praise and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists.﴾
(Ibn Abi Ḥatīm 1:12).

Also, the Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* recorded that Anas bin Mālik said, “I prayed behind the Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān and they used to start their prayer with,

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

﴿All praise and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists.﴾

Muslim added, “And they did not mention,

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾

﴿In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful﴾

[1] Aḥmad 6:302, Abu Dāwūd 4:294, Ibn Khuzaymah 1:248, Al-Ḥākim 2:231, Ad-Dāraquṭni 1:307.

[2] *Musnad Al-Imām Ash-Shāfi‘ī* 1:80, Al-Ḥākim 1:233.

whether in the beginning or the end of the recitation.”^[1] Similar is recorded in the *Sunan* books from ‘Abdullāh bin Mughaffal, may Allāh be pleased with him.^[2]

These are the opinions held by the respected Imāms, and their statements are similar in that they agree that the prayer of those who recite *Al-Fātiḥah* aloud or in secret is correct. All the favor is from Allāh.

The Virtue of Al-Fātiḥah

Imām Aḥmad recorded in his *Musnad*, that a person who was riding behind the Prophet ﷺ said, “The Prophet’s animal tripped, so I said, ‘Cursed *Shayṭān*.’ The Prophet ﷺ said,

«لَا تَقُلْ: تَعَسَ الشَّيْطَانُ، فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا قُلْتَ: تَعَسَ الشَّيْطَانُ، تَعَاظَمَ وَقَالَ: بِقُوَّتِي صَرَعْتُهُ، وَإِذَا قُلْتَ: بِاسْمِ اللَّهِ تَصَاغَرَ حَتَّى يَصِيرَ مِثْلَ الذَّبَابِ»

‘Do not say, ‘Cursed *Shayṭān*,’ for if you say these words, Satan becomes arrogant and says, ‘With my strength I made him fall.’ When you say, ‘Bismillāh,’ Satan will become as small as a fly.’^[3]

Further, An-Nasā’i recorded in his book *Al-Yawm wal-Laylah*, and also Ibn Marduyah in his *Tafsīr* that Usāmah bin ‘Umayr said, “I was riding behind the Prophet...” and he mentioned the rest of the above *Ḥadīth*. The Prophet ﷺ said in this narration,

«لَا تَقُلْ مُكَدًّا فَإِنَّهُ يَتَعَاظَمُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ كَالْبَيْتِ، وَلَكِنْ قُلْ: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ، فَإِنَّهُ يَصْغُرُ حَتَّى يَكُونَ كَالذَّبَابَةِ».

‘Do not say these words, because then Satan becomes larger; as

[1] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 2:265, and *Muslim* 1:299. We should state that Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar Al-Asqalānī said in his book *Bulūgh Al-Marām*, “Aḥmad, An-Nasā’ī and Ibn Khuzaymah recorded this wording (for the *Ḥadīth* above): They did not recite ﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ ﴿In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful﴾ aloud.’ In another narration by Ibn Khuzaymah, ‘They used to recite it silently.’ This is the meaning intended (by the *Ḥadīth* recorded by *Muslim*).”

[2] At-Tirmidhi no. 244.

[3] Aḥmad 5:59.

large as a house. Rather, say, 'Bismillāh,' because Satan then becomes as small as a fly. »^[1]

This is the blessing of reciting *Bismillāh*.

***Basmalah* is recommended before performing any Deed**

Basmalah (reciting *Bismillāh*) is recommended before starting any action or deed. For instance, *Basmalah* is recommended before starting a *Khutbah* (speech).

The *Basmalah* is also recommended before one enters the place where he wants to relieve himself, there is a *Ḥadīth* concerning this practice.^[2] Further, *Basmalah* is recommended at the beginning of ablution, for Imām Aḥmad and the *Sunan* compilers recorded that Abu Hurayrah, Saīd bin Zayd and Abu Saīd narrated from the Prophet ﷺ,

«لَا وُضُوءَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَذْكُرِ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ»

«There is no valid ablution for he who did not mention Allāh's Name in it.»^[3]

This *Ḥadīth* is *Ḥasan* (good). Also, the *Basmalah* is recommended before eating, for Muslim recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said to 'Umar bin Abi Salamah while he was a child under his care,

«قُلْ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَكُلْ بِيَمِينِكَ وَكُلْ مِمَّا يَلِيكَ»

«Say Bismillāh, eat with your right hand and eat from whatever is next to you.»^[4]

Some of the scholars stated that *Basmalah* before eating is obligatory. *Basmalah* before having sexual intercourse is also recommended. The Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* recorded that Ibn 'Abbās said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«لَوْ أَنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَهْلَهُ قَالَ: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ اللَّهُمَّ جَنِّبْنَا الشَّيْطَانَ وَجَنِّبِ الشَّيْطَانَ مَا رَزَقْتَنَا، فَإِنَّهُ إِنْ يَقْدَرُ بَيْنَهُمَا وَلَدٌ لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَبَدًا»

[1] An-Nasā'ī in *Al-Kubrā* 6:142.

[2] 'Awn Al-Ma'būd (the explanation of *Sunan Abu Dāwūd*) 1:6

[3] Aḥmad 3:41, Abu Dāwūd 1:75, *Tuhfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 1:115, An-Nasā'ī 1:61, and Ibn Mājah 1:140

[4] Muslim 3:1600.

‘If anyone of you before having sexual relations with his wife says, ‘In the Name of Allāh. O Allāh! Protect us from Satan and also protect what you grant us (meaning the coming offspring) from Satan,’ and if it is destined that they should have a child then, Satan will never be able to harm that child.’^[1]

The Meaning of “Allāh”

Allāh is the Name of the Lord, the Exalted. It is said that Allāh is the Greatest Name of Allāh, because it is referred to when describing Allāh by the various attributes. For instance, Allāh said,

﴿هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَالشَّهَادَةُ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝ هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّمُ الْمَرْبُ الْجَبَّارُ ۝ السَّكِينُ مُبَيَّنَّ اللَّهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ۝ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَلِيقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِينَ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝﴾

﴿He is Allāh, beside Whom Lā ilāha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He) the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. He is Allāh, beside Whom Lā ilāha illa Huwa, the King, the Holy, the One free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the Almighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allāh! (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with Him. He is Allāh, 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 Almighty, the Wise﴾ (59:22-24).

Hence, Allāh mentioned several of His Names as Attributes for His Name Allāh. Similarly, Allāh said,

﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا﴾

‘And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allāh, so call on Him by them﴾ (7:180), and,

﴿قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ﴾

[1] Fath Al-Bāri 9:136, Muslim 2:1058.

﴿Say (O Muhammad ﷺ) "Invoke Allāh or invoke the Most Gracious (Allāh), by whatever name you invoke Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names."﴾ (17:110)

Also, the Two Ṣaḥīḥs recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«إِنَّ لِلَّهِ تِسْعَةً وَتِسْعِينَ اسْمًا، مِائَةً إِلَّا وَاحِدًا، مَنْ أَحْصَاهَا دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ»

«Allāh has ninety-nine Names, one hundred minus one, whoever counts (and preserves) them, will enter Paradise.»^[1]

These Names were mentioned in a Ḥadīth recorded by At-Tirmidhi^[2] and Ibn Mājah, and there are several differences between these two narrations.

The Meaning of Ar-Raḥmān Ar-Raḥīm - the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Ar-Raḥmān and Ar-Raḥīm are two names derived from Ar-Raḥmah (the mercy), but Raḥmān has more meanings that pertain to mercy than Ar-Raḥīm. There is a statement by Ibn Jarīr that indicates that there is a consensus on this meaning. Further, Al-Qurṭubī said, "The proof that these names are derived (from Ar-Raḥmah), is what At-Tirmidhi recorded - and graded Ṣaḥīḥ from 'Abdur-Raḥmān bin 'Awf that he heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say,

«قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَنَا الرَّحْمَنُ خَلَقْتُ الرَّجْمَ وَشَقَقْتُ لَهَا اسْمًا مِنْ اسْمِي، فَمَنْ وَصَلَهَا وَصَلَتْهُ وَمَنْ قَطَعَهَا قَطَعَتْهُ»

«Allāh the Exalted said, 'I Am Ar-Raḥmān. I created the Raḥam (womb, i.e. family relations) and derived a name for it from My Name. Hence, whoever keeps it, I will keep ties to him, and whoever severs it, I will sever ties with him.'»^[3]

He then said, "This is a text that indicates the derivation." He then said, "The Arabs denied the name Ar-Raḥmān, because of their ignorance about Allāh and His attributes."

Al-Qurṭubī said, "It was said that both Ar-Raḥmān and Ar-Raḥīm have the same meaning, such as the words Nadmān

[1] Fath Al-Bārī 11:218, Muslim 4:2062.

[2] Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī 9:480, and Ibn Mājah 2:1269.

[3] Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī 6:33

and *Nadīm*, as Abu 'Ubayd has stated. Abu 'Ali Al-Fārisi said, 'Ar-Raḥmān, which is exclusively for Allāh, is a name that encompasses every type of mercy that Allāh has. Ar-Raḥīm is what effects the believers, for Allāh said,

﴿وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا﴾

﴿And He is ever Raḥīm (merciful) to the believers.﴾' (33:43)

Also, Ibn 'Abbās said - about Ar-Raḥmān and Ar-Raḥīm, They are two soft names, one of them is softer than the other (meaning it carries more implications of mercy).^[1]

Ibn Jarīr said; As-Surri bin Yaḥyā At-Tamīmī narrated to me that 'Uthmān bin Zufar related that Al-'Azraḥī said about Ar-Raḥmān and Ar-Raḥīm, "He is Ar-Raḥmān with all creation and Ar-Raḥīm with the believers."^[2] Hence. Allāh's statements,

﴿ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ﴾

﴿Then He rose over (Istawā) the Throne (in a manner that suits His majesty), Ar-Raḥmān﴾ (25:59), and,

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ أَسْتَوَىٰ﴾

﴿Ar-Raḥmān (Allāh) rose over (Istawā) the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His majesty).﴾ (20:5)

Allāh thus mentioned the *Istawā* - rising over the Throne - along with His Name Ar-Raḥmān, to indicate that His mercy encompasses all of His creation. Allāh also said,

﴿وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا﴾

﴿And He is ever Raḥīm (merciful) to the believers﴾, thus encompassing the believers with His Name Ar-Raḥīm. They said, "This testifies to the fact that Ar-Raḥmān carries a broader scope of meanings pertaining to the mercy of Allāh with His creation in both lives. Meanwhile, Ar-Raḥīm is exclusively for the believers." Yet, we should mention that there is a supplication that reads,

﴿رَحْمَنَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَرَحِيمَهُمَا﴾

«The Raḥmān and the Raḥīm of this life and the Hereafter»

[1] Tafsīr Al-Qurṭubī 1:105.

[2] Aṭ-Ṭabarī 1:127.

Allāh's Name Ar-Raḥmān is exclusively His. For instance, Allāh said,

﴿قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ﴾

﴿Say (O Muḥammad ﷺ): "Invoke Allāh or invoke Ar-Raḥmān (Allāh), by whatever name you invoke Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names﴾ (17:110), and,

﴿وَسْئَلُ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ آلِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ﴾

﴿And ask (O Muḥammad ﷺ) those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you: "Did We ever appoint ālihah (gods) to be worshipped besides Ar-Raḥmān (Most Gracious, Allāh)?"﴾ (43:45).

Further, when Musaylimah the Liar called himself the Raḥmān of Yamamah, Allāh made him known by the name 'Liar' and exposed him. Hence, whenever Musaylimah is mentioned, he is described as 'the Liar'. He became an example for lying among the residents of the cities and villages and the residents of the deserts, the bedouins.

Therefore, Allāh first mentioned His Name - Allāh - that is exclusively His and described this Name by Ar-Raḥmān, which no one else is allowed to use, just as Allāh said,

﴿قُلْ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ﴾

﴿Say (O Muḥammad ﷺ): "Invoke Allāh or invoke Ar-Raḥmān (Allāh), by whatever name you invoke Him (it is the same), for to Him belong the Best Names."﴾ (17:110)

Only Musaylimah and those who followed his misguided ways described Musaylimah by Ar-Raḥmān.

As for Allāh's Name Ar-Raḥīm, Allāh has described others by it. For instance, Allāh said,

﴿لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ زَوَّافٌ ۚ﴾

﴿Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muḥammad ﷺ) from amongst yourselves (i.e. whom you know well). It grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He (Muḥammad ﷺ) is anxious over you (to be rightly guided) for the believers (he ﷺ is) kind (full of pity), and Raḥīm

(merciful) ﴿9:128﴾.

Allāh has also described some of His creation using some of His other Names. For instance, Allāh said,

﴿إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا﴾

﴿Verily, We have created man from Nutfah (drops) of mixed semen (sexual discharge of man and woman), in order to try him, so We made him hearer (Samī') and seer (Baṣīr) (76:2).﴾

In conclusion, there are several of Allāh's Names that are used as names for others besides Allāh. Further, some of Allāh's Names are exclusive for Allāh alone, such as Allāh, Ar-Raḥmān, Al-Khāliq (the Creator), Ar-Rāziq (the Sustainer), and so forth.

Hence, Allāh started the *Tasmiyah* (meaning, 'In the Name of Allāh, Most Gracious Most Merciful') with His Name, Allāh, and described Himself as Ar-Raḥmān, (Most Gracious) which is softer and more general than Ar-Raḥīm. The most honorable Names are mentioned first, just as Allāh did here.

A Ḥadīth narrated by Umm Salamah stated that the recitation of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ was slow and clear, letter by letter,

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّكَّابِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ ﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ ﴿الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ ﴿مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ﴾

﴿In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All the praises and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. The Owner of the Day of Recompense﴾ (1:1-4).

And this is how a group of scholars recite it. Others connected the recitation of the *Tasmiyah* to *Al-Ḥamd*.

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

﴿2. Al-Ḥamd be to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists.﴾

The Meaning of Al-Ḥamd

Abu Ja'far bin Jarīr said, "The meaning of

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

﴿Al-Hamdu Lillāh﴾ (all praise and thanks be to Allāh) is: all thanks are due purely to Allāh, alone, not any of the objects that are being worshipped instead of Him, nor any of His creation. These thanks are due to Allāh's innumerable favors and bounties, that only He knows the amount of. Allāh's bounties include creating the tools that help the creation worship Him, the physical bodies with which they are able to implement His commands, the sustenance that He provides them in this life, and the comfortable life He has granted them, without anything or anyone compelling Him to do so. Allāh also warned His creation and alerted them about the means and methods with which they can earn eternal dwelling in the residence of everlasting happiness. All thanks and praise are due to Allāh for these favors from beginning to end."^[1]

Further, Ibn Jarir commented on the *Āyah*,

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

﴿Al-Hamdu Lillāh﴾, that it means, "A praise that Allāh praised Himself with, indicating to His servants that they too should praise Him, as if Allāh had said, 'Say: All thanks and praise is due to Allāh.' It was said that the statement,

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ﴾

﴿All praise and thanks be to Allāh﴾, entails praising Allāh by mentioning His most beautiful Names and most honorable Attributes. When one proclaims, 'All thanks are due to Allāh,' he will be thanking Him for His favors and bounties."^[2]

The Difference between Praise and Thanks

Hamd is more general, in that it is a statement of praise for one's characteristics, or for what he has done. Thanks are given for what was done, not merely for characteristics.

The Statements of the Salaf about Al-Hamd

Ḥaṣṣ mentioned that 'Umar said to 'Ali, "We know *Lā ilāha illallāh*, *Subḥān Allāh* and *Allāhu Akbar*. What about *Al-Hamdu Lillāh*?" 'Ali said, "A statement that Allāh liked for

^[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 1:135.

^[2] Aṭ-Ṭabari 1:137.

Himself, was pleased with for Himself and He likes that it be repeated.”^[1] Also, Ibn ‘Abbās said, “*Al-Ḥamdu Lillāh* is the statement of appreciation. When the servant says *Al-Ḥamdu Lillāh*, Allāh says, ‘My servant has praised Me.’” Ibn Abi Ḥātim recorded this *Ḥadīth*.^[2]

The Virtues of Al-Ḥamd

Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal recorded that Al-Aswad bin Sarī’ said, “I said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Should I recite to you words of praise for My Lord, the Exalted, that I have collected?’ He said,

«أَمَا إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يُحِبُّ الْحَمْدَ»

«Verily, your Lord likes Al-Ḥamd.»

An-Nasā’ī also recorded this *Ḥadīth*.^[3] Furthermore, Abu ‘Isā At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah recorded that Mūsā bin Ibrāhīm bin Kathīr related that Ṭalḥah bin Khirāsh said that Jābir bin ‘Abdullāh said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«أَفْضَلُ الذِّكْرِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَأَفْضَلُ الدُّعَاءِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ»

«The best Dhikr (remembering Allāh) is *Lā ilaha illallāh* and the best supplication is *Al-Ḥamdu Lillāh*.»

At-Tirmidhi said that this *Ḥadīth* is *Ḥasan Gharīb*.^[4] Also, Ibn Mājah recorded that Anas bin Mālik said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«مَا أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى عَبْدٍ نَعِمَةً فَقَالَ: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، إِلَّا كَانَ الَّذِي أُعْطِيَ أَفْضَلَ مِمَّا أَخَذَ»

«No servant is blessed by Allāh and says, ‘*Al-Ḥamdu Lillāh*’, except that what he was given is better than that which he has himself acquired.»^[5]

Further, in his *Sunan*, Ibn Mājah recorded that Ibn ‘Umar

[1] At-Tabari. 1:15.

[2] Ibid. 1:13.

[3] Aḥmad 3:435, and An-Nasā’ī in *Al-Kubrā* 4:416.

[4] *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 9:324, An-Nasā’ī in *Al-Kubrā* 6:208, Ibn Mājah 2:1249.

[5] Ibn Mājah 2:1250

said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«إِنَّ عَبْدًا مِنْ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: يَا رَبِّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ كَمَا يَتَّبِعِي لِجَلَالِ وَجْهِكَ وَعَظِيمِ سُلْطَانِكَ. فَعَصَلْتُ بِالْمَلَائِكَةِ فَلَمْ يَذَرِيَا كَيْفَ يَكْتُبَانِيهَا فَصَعِدَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَالَا: يَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّ عَبْدًا قَدْ قَالَ مَقَالَ لَا نَذَرِي كَيْفَ نَكْتُبُهَا، قَالَ اللَّهُ، وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا قَالَ عَبْدُهُ: مَاذَا قَالَ عَبْدِي؟ قَالَا: يَا رَبِّ إِنَّهُ قَالَ: لَكَ الْحَمْدُ يَا رَبِّ كَمَا يَتَّبِعِي لِجَلَالِ وَجْهِكَ وَعَظِيمِ سُلْطَانِكَ. فَقَالَ اللَّهُ لَهُمَا: اكْتُبَاهَا كَمَا قَالَ عَبْدِي، حَتَّى يَلْقَانِي فَأَجْزِيَهُ بِهَا.»

«A servant of Allāh once said, 'O Allāh! Yours is the *Ḥamd* that is suitable for the grace of Your Face and the greatness of Your Supreme Authority.' The two angels were confused as to how to write these words. They ascended to Allāh and said, 'O our Lord! A servant has just uttered a statement and we are unsure how to record it for him.' Allāh said while having more knowledge in what His servant has said, 'What did My servant say?' They said, 'He said, 'O Allāh! Yours is the *Ḥamd* that is suitable for the grace of Your Face and the greatness of Your Supreme Authority.' Allāh said to them, 'Write it as My servant has said it, until he meets Me and then I shall reward him for it.'^[1]

Al before Ḥamd encompasses all Types of Thanks and Appreciation for Allāh

The letters *Alif* and *Lām* before the word *Ḥamd* serve to encompass all types of thanks and appreciation for Allāh, the Exalted. A *Ḥadīth* stated,

«اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ كُلُّهُ، وَلَكَ الْمُلْكُ كُلُّهُ، وَيَبْدِكَ الْخَيْرُ كُلُّهُ، وَإِلَيْكَ يُرْجَعُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ»

«O Allāh! All of *Al-Ḥamd* is due to You, You own all the ownership, all types of good are in Your Hand and all affairs belong to You.»^[2]

[1] Ibn Mājah 2:1249.

[2] *At-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb* 2:253.

The Meaning of *Ar-Rabb*, the Lord

Ar-Rabb is the owner who has full authority over his property. *Ar-Rabb*, linguistically means, the master or the one who has the authority to lead. All of these meanings are correct for Allāh. When it is alone, the word *Rabb* is used only for Allāh. As for other than Allāh, it can be used to say *Rabb Ad-Dār*, the master of such and such object. Further, it was reported that *Ar-Rabb* is Allāh's Greatest Name.

The Meaning of *Al-Ālamīn*

Al-Ālamīn is plural for *Ālam*, which encompasses everything in existence except Allāh. The word *Ālam* is itself a plural word, having no singular form. The *Ālamīn* are different creations that exist in the heavens and the earth, on land and at sea. Every generation of creation is called an *Ālam*. Al-Farrā' and Abu 'Ubayd said, "*Ālam* includes all that has a mind, the *Jinns*, mankind, the angels and the devils, but not the animals." Also, Zayd bin Aslam and Abu Muḥayṣin said, '*Ālam* includes all that Allāh has created with a soul.' Further, Qatādah said about,

﴿رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

﴿The Lord of the Ālamīn﴾, "Every type of creation is an *Ālam*." Az-Zajjāj also said, "*Ālam* encompasses everything that Allāh created, in this life and in the Hereafter." Al-Qurtūbi commented, "This is the correct meaning, that the *Ālam* encompasses everything that Allāh created in both worlds. Similarly, Allāh said,

﴿قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۚ قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ إِن كُنتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ﴾

﴿Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "And what is the Lord of the 'Ālamīn?" Mūsā (Moses) said: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, if you seek to be convinced with certainty"﴾ (26:23-24).

Why is the Creation called *Ālam*?

Ālam is derived from *Ālāmah*, that is because it is a sign testifying to the existence of its Creator and to His Oneness.^[1]

[1] Al-Qurtūbi 1:139.

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

﴿3. Ar-Rahmān (the Most Gracious), Ar-Rahīm (the Most Merciful)﴾. Allāh said next,

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

﴿Ar-Rahmān (the Most Gracious), Ar-Rahīm (the Most Merciful)﴾ We explained these Names in the *Basmalah*. Al-Qurtubi said, "Allāh has described Himself by 'Ar-Rahmān, Ar-Rahīm' after saying 'the Lord of the Ālamīn', so His statement here includes a warning, and then an encouragement. Similarly, Allāh said,

﴿يَقِمْ عِبَادَتِي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ۖ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْمَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ﴾

﴿Declare (O Muḥammad ﷺ) unto My servants, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. And that My torment is indeed the most painful torment.﴾ (15:49-50)^[1] Allāh said,

﴿إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

﴿Surely, your Lord is swift in retribution, and certainly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾ (6:165)

Hence, *Rabb* contains a warning while *Ar-Rahmān Ar-Rahīm* encourages. Further, Muslim recorded in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

﴿لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْمُؤْمِنُ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْعُقُوبَةِ مَا طَمِعَ فِي جَنَّتِهِ أَحَدٌ، وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْكَافِرُ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ مَا قَنَطَ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ أَحَدٌ﴾

﴿If the believer knew what punishment Allāh has, none would have hope in acquiring His Paradise, and if the disbeliever knew what mercy Allāh has, none will lose hope of earning His earning.﴾^[2]

﴿مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ﴾

﴿4. The Owner of the Day of Recompense.﴾

Indicating Sovereignty on the Day of Judgment

Allāh mentioned His sovereignty of the Day of Resurrection,

[1] Ibid.

[2] Muslim 4:2109.

but this does not negate His sovereignty over all other things. For Allāh mentioned that He is the Lord of existence, including this earthly life and the Hereafter. Allāh only mentioned the Day of Recompense here because on that Day, no one except Him will be able to claim ownership of anything whatsoever. On that Day, no one will be allowed to speak without His permission. Similarly, Allāh said,

﴿يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْبَاشِرُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ۚ﴾

﴿The Day that Ar-Rūh (Jibrīl (Gabriel) or another angel) and the angels will stand forth in rows, they will not speak except him whom the Most Gracious (Allāh) allows, and he will speak what is right.﴾ (78:38),

﴿وَخُضِعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا﴾

﴿And all voices will be humbled for the Most Gracious (Allāh), and nothing shall you hear but the low voice of their footsteps.﴾ (20:108), and,

﴿يَوْمَ يَأْتِ لَا تَكَلَّمُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ سُقُوتٌ وَمَعِيدٌ ۖ﴾

﴿On the Day when it comes, no person shall speak except by His (Allāh's) leave. Some among them will be wretched and (others) blessed﴾ (11:105).

Aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk said that Ibn 'Abbās commented, "Allāh says, 'On that Day, no one owns anything that they used to own in the world.'"

The Meaning of Yawm Ad-Dīn

Ibn 'Abbās said, "Yawm Ad-Dīn is the Day of Recompense for the creatures, meaning the Day of Judgment. On that Day, Allāh will reckon the creation for their deeds, evil for evil, good for good, except for those whom He pardons."^[1] In addition, several other Companions, Tābi'īn and scholars of the Salaf, said similarly, for this meaning is apparent and clear from the Āyah.

Allāh is Al-Mālik (King or Owner)

Allāh is the True Owner (Mālik) (of everything and everyone). Allāh said,

^[1] Ibn Abi Ḥātim 1:19.

﴿هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ أَلَنُومٌ﴾

«He is Allāh, beside Whom Lā ilāha illa Huwa, the King, the Holy, the One free from all defects» (59:23).

Also, the Two Ṣaḥīḥs recorded Abu Hurayrah saying that the Prophet ﷺ said,

«أَخْتَنُ اسْمٍ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ رَجُلٌ تَسْمَى بِمَلِكِ الْأُمَلَاكِ وَلَا مَالِكَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ»

«The most despicable name to Allāh is a person who calls himself the king of kings, while there are no owners except Allāh.»^[1]

Also the Two Ṣaḥīḥs recorded that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«يَقْبِضُ اللَّهُ الْأَرْضَ وَيَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ بِيَمِينِهِ ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: أَنَا الْمَلِكُ، أَيْنَ مُلُوكُ الْأَرْضِ؟ أَيْنَ الْجَبَّارُونَ؟ أَيْنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرُونَ؟»

«(On the Day of Judgement) Allāh will grasp the earth and fold up the heavens with His Right Hand and proclaim, 'I Am the King! Where are the kings of the earth? Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant?'»^[2]

Also, in the the Glorious Qur'ān;

﴿لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ﴾

«Whose is the kingdom this Day? Allāh's, the One, the Irresistible.» (40:16).

As for calling someone other than Allāh a king in this life, then it is done as a figure of speech. For instance, Allāh said,

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا﴾

«Indeed Allāh appointed Tālūt (Saul) as a king over you.» (2:247),

﴿وَكَانَ وَرَاءَهُم مَّلِكٌ﴾

«As there was a king behind them» (18:79), and,

﴿إِذْ جَمَلَ فِيكُمْ أَتْيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا﴾

[1] Fath Al-Bārī 1:604 and Muslim 3:1688.

[2] Fath Al-Bārī 13:404 and Muslim 4:2148.

﴿When He made Prophets among you, and made you kings﴾ (5:20).
Also, the Two Ṣaḥīḥs recorded,

«يُنْثَلُ الْمُلُوكُ عَلَى الْأَسِرَّةِ»

«Just like kings reclining on their thrones»^[1]

The Meaning of Ad-Dīn

Ad-Dīn means the reckoning, the reward or punishment. Similarly, Allāh said,

﴿يَوْمَ يُؤْتِيهِمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ﴾

﴿On that Day Allāh will pay them the (Dīnahum) recompense
(of their deeds) in full﴾ (24:25), and,

﴿أَوَلَا لَمَدِينُونَ﴾

﴿Shall we indeed (be raised up) to receive reward or punishment
(according to our deeds)?﴾ (37:53). A Ḥadīth stated,

«الْكَيْسُ مَنْ دَانَ نَفْسَهُ وَعَمِلَ لِمَا بَعْدَ الْمَوْتِ»

«The wise person is he who reckons himself and works for (his
life) after death.»^[2]

meaning, he holds himself accountable. Also, ‘Umar said,
“Hold yourself accountable before you are held accountable,
weigh yourselves before you are weighed, and be prepared for
the biggest gathering before He Whose knowledge encompasses
your deeds,

﴿يَوْمَ يُرْضَوْنَ لَا تَخَفْ مِنْكَ خَائِفَةٌ﴾

﴿That Day shall you be brought to Judgement, not a secret of
yours will be hidden﴾ (69:18).”

﴿إِنَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِنَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

﴿5. You we worship, and You we ask for help.﴾ (1:5)

The Linguistic and Religious Meaning of ‘Tbādah

Linguistically, ‘Tbādah means subdued. For instance, a road

[1] Fath Al-Bārī 6:89 and Muslim 3:1518.

[2] Ibn Mājah 2:1423.

is described as *Mu'abbadah*, meaning, 'paved'. In religious terminology, *Tbādah* implies the utmost love, humility and fear.

The Merit of stating the Object of the Action before the Doer of the Act, and the Merit of these Negations

"You...", means, we worship You alone and none else, and rely on You alone and none else. This is the perfect form of obedience and the entire religion is implied by these two ideas. Some of the Salaf said, *Al-Fātiḥah* is the secret of the Qur'ān, while these words are the secret of *Al-Fātiḥah*,

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

﴿5. You we worship, and You we ask for help from.﴾

The first part is a declaration of innocence from *Shirk* (polytheism), while the second negates having any power or strength, displaying the recognition that all affairs are controlled by Allāh alone. This meaning is reiterated in various instances in the Qur'ān. For instance, Allāh said,

﴿فَاعْبُدْهُ وَوَكَّلْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَمْكُرُونَ﴾

﴿So worship Him (O Muḥammad ﷺ) and put your trust in Him. And your Lord is not unaware of what you (people) do.﴾ (11:123),

﴿قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَنَّانٌ بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا﴾

﴿Say: "He is the Most Gracious (Allāh), in Him we believe, and in Him we put our trust."﴾ (67:29),

﴿رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا﴾

﴿(He alone is) the Lord of the east and the west; Lā ilāha illā Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He). So take Him alone as Wakil (Disposer of your affairs)﴾, (73:9), and,

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

﴿You we worship, and You we ask for help from.﴾.

We should mention that in this *Āyah*, the type of speech here changes from the third person to direct speech by using the *Kāf* in the statement *Iyyāka* (You). This is because after the servant praised and thanked Allāh, he stands before Him,

addressing Him directly;

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

«You we worship, and You we ask for help from».

Al-Fātiḥah indicates the Necessity of praising Allāh. It is required in every Prayer.

The beginning of Sūrat Al-Fātiḥah contains Allāh's praise for Himself by His most beautiful Attributes and indicates to His servants that, they too, should praise Him in the same manner. Hence, the prayer is not valid unless one recites Al-Fātiḥah, if he is able. The Two Ṣaḥīḥs recorded that 'Ubādah bin Aṣ-Ṣāmit said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ»

«There is no valid prayer for whoever does not recite Al-Fātiḥah of the Book.»^[1]

Also, it is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«يَقُولُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى : قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ، فَنِصْفُهَا لِي وَنِصْفُهَا لِعَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ، إِذَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ: الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، قَالَ اللَّهُ: حَمْدُنِي عَبْدِي، وَإِذَا قَالَ: الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ، قَالَ اللَّهُ: أَثْنَى عَلَيَّ عَبْدِي فَإِذَا قَالَ: مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ، قَالَ اللَّهُ: مَجَّدَنِي عَبْدِي، وَإِذَا قَالَ: إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ، قَالَ: هَذَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي، وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ، فَإِذَا قَالَ: اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ، قَالَ: هَذَا لِعَبْدِي، وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ»

«Allāh said, 'I divided the prayer into two halves between Myself and My servant, one half is for Me and one half for My servant. My servant shall have what he asks for.' When the servant says,

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

«All praise and thanks be to Allāh, the Lord of all that exists.»

[1] Faṭḥ Al-Bārī 2:276 and Muslim 1:295.

Allāh says, 'My servant has praised Me.' When the servant says,

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

﴿The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful﴾, Allāh says, 'My servant has praised Me.' When the servant says,

﴿مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ﴾

﴿The Owner of the Day of Recompense﴾, Allāh says, 'My servant has glorified Me.' If the servant says,

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

﴿You we worship, and You we ask for help﴾, Allāh says, 'This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall have what he asked.' If the servant says,

﴿اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝﴾

﴿Guide us to the straight path. The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not (that) of those who have earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray﴾, Allāh says, 'This is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he asked.'^[1]

Tawhīd Al-Ulūhiyyah

Ad-Daḥḥāk narrated that Ibn 'Abbās said,

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ﴾

﴿You we worship﴾ means, "It is You whom we single out, Whom we fear and Whom we hope in, You alone, our Lord, and none else.

Tawhīd Ar-Rubūbiyyah

﴿وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

﴿And You we ask for help from﴾, to obey you and in all of our affairs."^[2] Further, Qatādah said that the Āyah,

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

[1] Muslim 1 :297.

[2] Ibn Abi Ḥatīm 1 :19.

﴿You we worship, and You we ask for help from﴾ “Contains Allāh’s command to us to perform sincere worship for Him and to seek His aid concerning all of our affairs.”^[1] Allāh mentioned,

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ﴾

﴿You we worship﴾ before,

﴿وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

﴿And You we ask for help from﴾, because the objective here is the worship, while Allāh’s help is the tool to implement this objective. Certainly, one first takes care of the most important aspects and then what is less important, and Allāh knows best.

Allāh called His Prophet ﷺ an ‘Abd

Allāh called His Messenger ﷺ an ‘Abd (servant) when He mentioned sending down His Book, the Prophet’s involvement in inviting to Him, and when mentioning the *Isrā’* (overnight journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and then to heaven), and these are the Prophet’s most honorable missions. Allāh said,

﴿لَتَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتَابَ﴾

﴿All praise and thanks be to Allāh, Who has sent down to His servant (Muḥammad ﷺ) the Book (the Qur’ān)﴾ (18:1),

﴿وَأَنْتُمْ لَنَا عَمَدٌ أَلَّهُ بِدَعْوَتِهِ﴾

﴿And when the servant of Allāh (Muḥammad ﷺ) stood up invoking Him (his Lord – Allāh in prayer)﴾, (72:19) and,

﴿سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ. لَيْلًا﴾

﴿Glorified (and Exalted) be He (Allāh) (above all that they associate with Him) Who took His servant (Muḥammad ﷺ) for a journey by night﴾ (17:1).

Encouraging the Performance of the Acts of Worship during Times of Distress

Allāh also recommended that His Prophet ﷺ resort to acts of worship during times when he felt distressed because of the

^[1] Ibid. 1:20.

disbelievers who defied and denied him. Allāh said,

﴿وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ ﴿٩٩﴾﴾

«Indeed, We know that your breast is straitened at what they say. So glorify the praises of your Lord and be of those who prostrate themselves (to Him). And worship your Lord until there comes unto you the certainty (i.e. death)» (15:97-99).

Why Praise was mentioned First

Since the praise of Allāh, Who is being sought for help, was mentioned, it was appropriate that one follows the praise by asking for his need. We stated that Allāh said,

﴿فَنُصِفْهَا لِي وَنُصِفْهَا لِعَبْدِي، وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ﴾

«One half for Myself and one half for My servant, and My servant shall have what he asked.»

This is the best method for seeking help, by first praising the one whom help is sought from and then asking for His aid, and help for one's self, and for his Muslim brethren by saying,

﴿أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١﴾﴾

«Guide us to the straight path.»

This method is more appropriate and efficient in bringing about a positive answer to the pleas, and this is why Allāh recommended this better method.

Asking for help may take the form of conveying the condition of the person who is seeking help. For instance, the Prophet Moses said,

﴿رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ﴾

«My Lord! Truly, I am in need of whatever good that You bestow on me!» (28:24).

Also, one may first mention the attributes of whoever is being asked, such as what Dhun-Nūn said,

﴿لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾

«Lā ilāhā illā Anta (none has the right to be worshipped but You (O Allāh)), Glorified (and Exalted) be You (above all that

they associate with You)! Truly, I have been of the wrongdoers» (21:87).

Further, one may praise Him without mentioning what he needs.

The Meaning of Guidance mentioned in the Sūrah

The guidance mentioned in the Sūrah implies being directed and guided to success. Allāh said,

﴿أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ﴾

«Guide us to the straight path» meaning guide, direct, lead and grant us the correct guidance. Also,

﴿وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ﴾

«And shown him the two ways (good and evil)?» (90:10), means, 'We explained to him the paths of good and evil.' Also, Allāh said,

﴿أَخْتَبْنَاهُ وَهَدَيْنَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

«He (Allāh) chose him (as an intimate friend) and guided him to a straight path» (16:121), and,

﴿فَأَمْدَدْنَاهُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُنِيرٍ﴾

«And lead them on to the way of flaming Fire (Hell)» (37:23). Similarly, Allāh said,

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ﴾

«And verily, you (O Muḥammad ﷺ) are indeed guiding (mankind) to the straight path» (42:52), and,

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا﴾

«All praise and thanks be to Allāh, Who has guided us to this» (7:43),

meaning, guided us and directed us and qualified us for this end - Paradise.

The Meaning of Aṣ-Ṣirāṭ Al-Mustaḳīm, the Straight Path.

As for the meaning of Aṣ-Ṣirāṭ Al-Mustaḳīm, Imām Abu Ja'far

Aṭ-Ṭabari said, "The *Ummah* agreed that *Ṣirāṭ Al-Mustaqīm*, is the clear path without branches, according to the language of the Arabs. For instance, Jarīr bin 'Aṭīyah Al-Khaṭafī said in a poem, 'The Leader of the faithful is on a path that will remain straight even though the other paths are crooked.'" Aṭ-Ṭabari also stated that, "There are many evidences to this fact." Aṭ-Ṭabari then proceeded, "The Arabs use the term, *Ṣirāṭ* in reference to every deed and statement whether righteous or wicked. Hence the Arabs would describe the honest person as being straight and the wicked person as being crooked. The straight path mentioned in the Qur'ān refers to Islām."^[1]

Imām Aḥmad recorded in his *Musnad* that An-Nawwās bin Sam'ān said that the Prophet ﷺ said,

«صَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا، وَعَلَى جَنْبَيْهِ الصَّرَاطِ سُورَانِ فِيهِمَا أَبْوَابٌ مَفْتُحَةٌ، وَعَلَى الْأَبْوَابِ سُورٌ مُرْخَاةٌ، وَعَلَى بَابِ الصَّرَاطِ دَاعٍ يَقُولُ: يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ادْخُلُوا الصَّرَاطَ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَغْوُجُوا، وَدَاعٍ يَدْعُو مِنْ فَوْقِ الصَّرَاطِ، فَإِذَا أَرَادَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يَفْتَحَ شَيْئًا مِنْ بَلَكِ الْأَبْوَابِ قَالَ: وَيْحَكَ لَا تَفْتَحْهُ فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ فَتَحْتَهُ تَلِجُهُ فَالصَّرَاطُ: الْإِسْلَامُ وَالسُّورَانِ: حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَالْأَبْوَابُ الْمَفْتُحَةُ مَحَارِمُ اللَّهِ وَذَلِكَ الدَّاعِي عَلَى رَأْسِ الصَّرَاطِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَالدَّاعِي مِنْ فَوْقِ الصَّرَاطِ وَاعِظُ اللَّهِ فِي قَلْبِ كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ»

«Allāh has set an example: a *Ṣirāṭ* (straight path) that is surrounded by two walls on both sides, with several open doors within the walls covered with curtains. There is a caller on the gate of the *Ṣirāṭ* who heralds, 'O people! Stay on the path and do not deviate from it.' Meanwhile, a caller from above the path is also warning any person who wants to open any of these doors, 'Woe unto you! Do not open it, for if you open it you will pass through.' The straight path is Islām, the two walls are Allāh's set limits, while the doors resemble what Allāh has prohibited. The caller on the gate of the *Ṣirāṭ* is the Book of Allāh, while the caller above the *Ṣirāṭ* is Allāh's admonishment in the heart of every Muslim.»^[2]

[1] Aṭ-Ṭabari 1:170.

[2] Aḥmad 4:182.

The Faithful ask for and abide by Guidance

If someone asks, "Why does the believer ask Allāh for guidance during every prayer and at other times, while he is already properly guided? Has he not already acquired guidance?"

The answer to these questions is that if it were not a fact that the believer needs to keep asking for guidance day and night, Allāh would not have directed him to invoke Him to acquire the guidance. The servant needs Allāh the Exalted every hour of his life to help him remain firm on the path of guidance and to make him even more firm and persistent on it. The servant does not have the power to benefit or harm himself, except by Allāh's permission. Therefore, Allāh directed the servant to invoke Him constantly, so that He provides him with His aid and with firmness and success. Indeed, the happy person is he whom Allāh guides to ask of Him. This is especially the case if a person urgently needs Allāh's help day or night. Allāh said,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ. وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ. وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي
أَنزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ﴾

﴿O you who believe! Believe in Allāh, and His Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ), and the Book (the Qur'ān) which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those before (him)﴾ (4:16).

Therefore, in this Āyah Allāh commanded the believers to believe, and this command is not redundant since what is sought here is firmness and continuity of performing the deeds that help one remain on the path of faith. Also, Allāh commanded His believing servants to proclaim,

﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُغِثْ قُلُوبَنَا بَدًّا إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَاقِعُ﴾

﴿Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us, and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower.﴾ (3:8). Hence,

﴿أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ﴾

﴿Guide us to the straight way﴾ means, "Make us firm on the path of guidance and do not allow us to deviate from it."

﴿صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾

﴿7. The way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace, not (that) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray﴾.

We mentioned the *Hadīth* in which the servant proclaims,

﴿اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ﴾

﴿Guide us to the straight way﴾ and Allāh says, "This is for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he asks for." Allāh's statement.

﴿صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

﴿The way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace﴾ defines the path. 'Those upon whom Allāh has bestowed His grace' are those mentioned in *Sūrat An-Nisā'* (chapter 4), when Allāh said,

﴿وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا﴾ ذَٰلِكَ الْفَضْلُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا﴾

﴿And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger (Muḥammad ﷺ), then they will be in the company of those on whom Allāh has bestowed His grace, the Prophets, the Ṣiddiqīn (the truly faithful), the martyrs, and the righteous. And how excellent these companions are! Such is the bounty from Allāh, and Allāh is sufficient to know﴾ (4:69-70).

Allāh's statement,

﴿غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾

﴿Not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray﴾

meaning guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom you have bestowed Your grace, that is, the people of guidance, sincerity and obedience to Allāh and His Messengers. They are the people who adhere to Allāh's commandments and refrain from committing what He has prohibited. But, help us to avoid the path of those whom Allāh is angry with, whose intentions are corrupt, who know the truth, yet deviate from it. Also, help us avoid the path of those

who were led astray, who lost the true knowledge and, as a result, are wandering in misguidance, unable to find the correct path. Allāh asserted that the two paths He described here are both misguided when He repeated the negation 'not'. These two paths are the paths of the Christians and Jews, a fact that the believer should beware of so that he avoids them. The path of the believers is knowledge of the truth and abiding by it. In comparison, the Jews abandoned practicing the religion, while the Christians lost the true knowledge. This is why 'anger' descended upon the Jews, while being described as 'led astray' is more appropriate of the Christians. Those who know, but avoid implementing the truth, deserve the anger, unlike those who are ignorant. The Christians want to seek the true knowledge, but are unable to find it because they did not seek it from its proper resources. This is why they were led astray. We should also mention that both the Christians and the Jews have earned the anger and are led astray, but the anger is one of the attributes more particular of the Jews. Allāh said about the Jews,

﴿مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ﴾

﴿Those (Jews) who incurred the curse of Allāh and His wrath﴾
(5:60).

The attribute that the Christians deserve most is that of being led astray, just as Allāh said about them,

﴿قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ﴾

﴿Who went astray before and who misled many, and strayed (themselves) from the right path﴾ (5:77).

There are several *Ḥadīths* and reports from the Salaf on this subject. Imām Aḥmad recorded that 'Adi bin Ḥātim said, "The horsemen of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ seized my paternal aunt and some other people. When they brought them to the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, they were made to stand in line before him. My aunt said, 'O Messenger of Allāh! The supporter is far away, the offspring have stopped coming and I am an old woman, unable to serve. Grant me your favor, may Allāh grant you His favor.' He said, 'Who is your supporter?' She said, 'Adi bin Ḥātim.' He said, 'The one who ran away from Allāh and His Messenger?' She said, 'So, the Prophet ﷺ freed me.' When the

Prophet ﷺ came back, there was a man next to him, I think that he was 'Ali, who said to her, 'Ask him for a means of transportation.' She asked the Prophet ﷺ, and he ordered that she be given an animal." 'Adi then said, "Later on, she came to me and said, 'He (Muḥammad ﷺ) has done a favor that your father (who was a generous man) would never have done. So and-so person came to him and he granted him his favor, and so-and-so came to him and he granted him his favor.' So I went to the Prophet ﷺ and found that some women and children were gathering with him, so close that I knew that he was not a king like Kisra (King of Persia) or Caesar. He said, 'O 'Adi! What made you run away, so that *Lā ilāha illallāh* is not proclaimed? Is there a deity worthy of worship except Allāh? What made you run away, so that *Allāhu Akbar* (Allāh is the Greater) is not proclaimed? Is there anything Greater than Allāh?' I proclaimed my Islām and I saw his face radiate with pleasure and he said:

«إِنَّ الْمَغْضُوبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْيَهُودُ وَإِنَّ الضَّالِّينَ النَّصَارَى»

"Those who have earned the anger are the Jews and those who are led astray are the Christians."

This *Ḥadīth* was also collected by At-Tirmidhi who said that it is *Ḥasan Gharīb*.^[1]

Also, when Zayd bin 'Amr bin Nufayl went with some of his friends - before Islām - to Ash-Shām seeking the true religion, the Jews said to him, "You will not become a Jew unless you carry a share of the anger of Allāh that we have earned." He said, "I am seeking to escape Allāh's anger." Also, the Christians said to him, "If you become one of us you will carry a share in Allāh's discontent." He said, "I cannot bear it." So he remained in his pure nature and avoided worshipping the idols and the polytheistic practices. He became neither a Jew, nor Christian. As for his companions, they became Christians because they found it more pure than Judaism. Waraqah bin Nawfal was among these people until Allāh guided him by the hand of His Prophet ﷺ, when he was sent as Prophet, and Waraqah believed in the revelation that was sent to the Prophet ﷺ may Allāh be pleased with him.

[1] Aḥmad 4:378, and *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhi* 8:289.

The Summary of Al-Fātiḥah

The honorable *Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah* contains seven *Ayāt* including the praise and thanks of Allāh, glorifying Him and praising Him by mentioning His most Beautiful Names and most high Attributes. It also mentions the Hereafter, which is the Day of Resurrection, and directs Allāh's servants to ask of Him, invoking Him and declaring that all power and strength comes from Him. It also calls to the sincerity of the worship of Allāh alone, singling Him out in His divinity, believing in His perfection, being free from the need of any partners, having no rivals nor equals. *Al-Fātiḥah* directs the believers to invoke Allāh to guide them to the straight path, which is the true religion, and to help them remain on that path in this life, and to pass over the actual *Ṣirāṭ* (bridge over hell that everyone must pass over) on the Day of Judgment. On that Day, the believers will be directed to the gardens of comfort in the company of the Prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs and the righteous. *Al-Fātiḥah* also encourages performing good deeds, so that the believers will be in the company of the good-doers on the Day of Resurrection. The *Sūrah* also warns against following the paths of misguidance, so that one does not end up being gathered with those who indulge in sin, on the Day of Resurrection, including those who have earned the anger and those who were led astray.

The Bounties are because of Allah, not the Deviations

Allāh said,

﴿صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

«The way of those upon whom you have bestowed Your grace», when He mentioned His favor. On mentioning anger, Allāh said,

﴿غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

«Not (that) of those who earned Your anger», without mentioning the subject, although it is He Who has sent down the anger on them, just as Allāh stated in another *Āyah*,

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قَالُوا قَوْمًا غَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

«Have you (O Muḥammad ﷺ) not seen those (hypocrites) who take as friends a people upon whom is the wrath of Allāh (i.e.

Jews)?» (58:14).

Also, Allāh relates the misguidance of those who indulged in it, although they were justly misguided according to Allāh's appointed destiny. For instance, Allāh said,

﴿مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ فَلَنْ يَجِدَ لَهُ وَلِيًّا مُرِيدًا﴾

«He whom Allāh guides, he is the rightly-guided; but he whom He sends astray, for him you will find no Walī (guiding friend) to lead him (to the right path)» (18:17)

and,

﴿مَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ﴾

«Whomsoever Allāh sends astray, none can guide him; and He lets them wander blindly in their transgression» (7:186).

These and several other Āyāt testify to the fact that Allāh alone is the One Who guides and misguides, contrary to the belief of the Qadariyyah sect, who claimed that the servants choose and create their own destiny. They rely on some unclear Āyāt avoiding what is clear and contradicts their desires. Theirs, is the method of the people who follow their lust, desire and wickedness. An authentic Ḥadīth narrated,

«إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ سَمَى اللَّهُ فَاخْذَرُوهُمْ»

«When you see those who follow what is not so clear in it (the Qur'ān), then they are those whom Allāh has mentioned (refer to 3:7). Hence, avoid them.»^[1]

The Prophet ﷺ was referring to Allāh's statement,

﴿فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ﴾

«So as for those in whose hearts there is a deviation (from the truth) they follow that which is not entirely clear thereof, seeking Al-Fitnah (polytheism and trials), and seeking for its hidden meanings» (3:7).

Verily, no innovator in the religion could ever rely on any authentic evidence in the Qur'ān that testifies to his innovation. The Qur'ān came to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and guidance and misguidance. The Qur'ān does

^[1] Fath Al-Bārī 8:57.

not contain any discrepancies or contradictions, because it is a revelation from the Most Wise, Worthy of all praise.

Saying *Āmīn*

It is recommended to say *Āmīn* after finishing the recitation of *Al-Fatiḥah*. *Āmīn* means, "O Allāh! Accept our invocation." The evidence that saying *Āmīn* is recommended is contained in what Imāms Aḥmad, Abu Dāwud and At-Tirmidhi recorded, that Wā'il bin Ḥujr said, "I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ recite,

﴿غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾

﴿Not (that) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray﴾, and he said '*Āmīn*' extending it with his voice."^[1]

Abu Dāwud's narration added, "Raising his voice with it." At-Tirmidhi then commented that this *Ḥadīth* is *Ḥasan* and was also narrated from 'Ali and Ibn Mas'ūd^[2]. Also, Abu Hurayrah narrated that whenever the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would recite,

﴿غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾

﴿Not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray﴾, He would say *Āmīn* until those who were behind him in the first line could hear him.^[3]

Abu Dāwud and Ibn Mājah recorded this *Ḥadīth* with the addition, "Then the *Masjid* would shake because of (those behind the Prophet ﷺ) reciting *Āmīn*."^[4] Also, Ad-Dāraquṭni recorded this *Ḥadīth* and commented that it is *Ḥasan*. Further, Bilāl narrated that he said, "O Messenger of Allāh! Do not finish saying *Āmīn* before I can join you."^[5] This was recorded by Abu Dāwud.^[6]

In addition, Abu Naṣr Al-Qushayri narrated that Al-Ḥasan and Ja'far Aṣ-Ṣādiq stressed the 'm' in *Āmīn*.

[1] Aḥmad 4:315, Abu Dāwud 1:574, *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 2:67.

[2] *Tuḥfat Al-Aḥwadhī* 2:67.

[3] Abu Dāwud 1:575.

[4] Abu Dāwud 1:575, Ibn Mājah 1:279.

[5] Ad-Daraquṭni 1:335

[6] Abu Dāwud 1:576.

Saying *Āmīn* is recommended for those who are not praying (when reciting *Al-Fātiḥah*) and is strongly recommended for those who are praying, whether alone or behind the Imām. The Two *Ṣaḥīḥs* recorded that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«إِذَا أَمَّنَ الْإِمَامُ فَأَمُّنُوا، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ وَافَقَ تَأْمِينَهُ تَأْمِينَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ»

«When the Imām says, 'Āmīn', then say, 'Āmīn', because whoever says, Āmīn' with the angels, his previous sins will be forgiven.»^[1]

Muslim recorded that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«إِذَا قَالَ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي الصَّلَاةِ: آمِينَ، وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ فِي السَّمَاءِ: آمِينَ، فَوَافَقَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْآخَرَى غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ»

«When any of you says in the prayer, 'Āmīn' and the angels in heaven say, 'Āmīn', in unison, his previous sins will be forgiven.»^[2]

It was said that the *Ḥadīth* talks about both the angels and the Muslims saying *Āmīn* at the same time. The *Ḥadīth* also refers to when the *Āmīns* said by the angels and the Muslims are equally sincere (thus bringing about forgiveness). Further, it is recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* that Abu Mūsā related to the Prophet ﷺ that he said,

«إِذَا قَالَ - يَعْنِي الْإِمَامُ - : وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ، فَقُولُوا: آمِينَ، يُجِبْكُمْ اللَّهُ»

«When the Imām says, 'Walad-dāllīn', say, 'Āmīn' and Allāh will answer your invocation.»^[3]

In addition, At-Tirmidhi said that '*Āmīn*' means, "Do not disappoint our hope", while the majority of scholars said that it means. "Answer our invocation."

Also, in his *Musnad*, Imām Aḥmad recorded that 'Ā'ishah said that when the Jews were mentioned to him, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said,

«إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَخْشَدُونَا عَلَى شَيْءٍ كَمَا يَخْشَدُونَ عَلَى الْجُمُعَةِ الَّتِي هَذَا اللَّهُ لَهَا وَضَلُّوا عَنْهَا، وَعَلَى الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي هَذَا اللَّهُ لَهَا وَضَلُّوا عَنْهَا وَعَلَى قَوْلِنَا خَلْفَ الْإِمَامِ: آمِينَ»

[1] *Faṭḥ Al-Bārī* 11:203 and Muslim 1:307.

[2] Muslim 1:307.

[3] Muslim 1:303.

«They will not envy us for anything more than they envy us for Friday which we have been guided to, while they were led astray from it, and for the Qiblah which we were guided to, while they were led astray from it, and for our saying 'Āmīn' behind the Imām.»^[1]

Also, Ibn Mājah recorded this Ḥadīth with the wording,

«مَا حَدَّثَكُمْ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مَا حَدَّثَكُمْ عَلَى السَّلَامِ وَالْأَمِينِ»

«The Jews have never envied you more than for your saying the Salām (Islāmic greeting) and for saying Āmīn.»^[2]

^[1] Aḥmad 6:134

^[2] Ibn Mājah 2:278.