

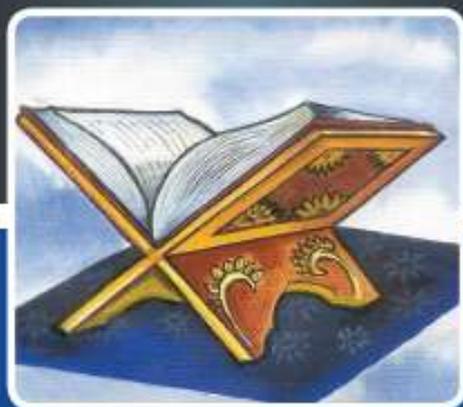
Q114

001

سورة الفاتحة

al-Fatihah

The Opening



فاطمة
Q Fatima

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وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ

And certainly We have given you seven of the oft-repeated (verses) and the grand Quran.

Suratul Hijr 15:87

SURATUL FATIHA

Suratul Fatiha consists of 7 ayaat.

It was revealed twice once in Makka and then in Madina.

It has about 15 names some of which are:

Ummul Kitab - Mother of the book or foundation of the book;

The Holy Qur'an contains the foundation of life transactions.

In Suratul Baqara aya 148 Allah states;

وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مُوَلِّئُهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ مَا
تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

And every one has a direction to which he should turn, therefore hasten to (do) good works; wherever you are, Allah will bring you all together; surely Allah has power over all things.

An extract from a book by Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland.

“One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. ‘Which road do I take?’ she asked. ‘Where do you want to go?’ He asked. ‘I don’t know.’ She said. ‘Then,’ said the cat; ‘it doesn’t matter.’

In the same way, if we don't know what we want in life then we will move with the wind. In our mind we should have a 'micro-picture' and a 'macro-picture' of what we want to achieve and a further picture of what you want to ultimately want. So for example, in my mind I picture a house in Janna. In order to attain that house, I have to lay foundations, which are my deeds in this world.

Anecdote:

There was once a carpenter who was retiring. His employer asked him to build one last house before he retired. As his heart was not in his work, he didn't put much effort in building the house and thus did a shoddy job of it. When his employer came to inspect the completed house, he gave the carpenter the keys saying, "This is your." At that moment he wished that he could turn back the time and build a stronger house.

Similarly, we build our lives not putting our best into it. The result will be a house in Janna which will be lacking a lot of things. If we don't design our own life plan, chances are we will fall into someone else's plan – and guess what they have planned for us – NOT MUCH.

Ash-Shifaa - The Healer;

As-Sab'a Mathani -The seven verses (repeated-revealed twice);

Al-Hamd - Sura of Praise;

Al-Fatiha - The Opening;

This sura is also known as **Suratul Fatihatul Kitaab** (the opening of the book). The very title proves that there was a book. It is the understanding of some Sunni scholars that the Qur'an was not compiled in the lifetime of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) however this title disproves that theory.

When one ponders over this sura, it opens so much within the nafs.

As-Salaa Sura of salaa.....

Suratul Fatiha is the most important Sura in the Qur`an. If it is completely absorbed, and if every word comes from a pure heart, you will cease to talk about opening and you will recognize that the vastness of Allah's mercy is never-ending, so you can only strive to increase, for after the constriction of ignorance, there can only come the expansion of knowledge.

Why do we recite Suratul Fatiha for the marhumeen?

The sura is the foundation of the Qur'an and thus contains the whole of the Qur'an in it. When we recite it for the marhumeen, in essence it will prompt us to change our ways and that will go as a gift to the marhumeen.

Benefits

The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said:

"To recite Suratul Fatiha is like reciting the whole Qur'an"

In some ahadith we find that the thawab is equivalent to recite 2/3 of the Qur'an.

"O Jabir! This Sura is a healer of all diseases with the exception of death"

He also said: "There can be no prayer which does not have Suratul Fatiha as its basis"

The thawab of reciting is the equivalent of giving a gift to every believing person.

If written with saffron, washed with rain water and drunk it provides healing for broken hearts.

Amaals for any kind of illnesses; physical, mental, spiritual or emotional:

100x Salawat

100x Suratul Fatiha

100x 4 Quls

100x Ayatul Kursi

100x Salawat

Tafseer (exegesis), means explaining the meanings of the Qur'anic aya, clarifying it's and finding out its significance.

Ta'wil (interpretation) is that reality to which an aya refers; it is not a sort of a meaning of the word; it is a real fact that is

too sublime for words; Allah has dressed them with words so as to bring them a bit nearer to our minds; in this respect they are like proverbs that are used to create a picture in the mind and thus help the hearer to clearly grasp the intended idea.

"And verily, the exterior of the Qur'an is elegant and its meaning is deep. Its wonders cannot be enumerated, and its marvels will not cease; and the darkness cannot be removed except by itself." (Imam 'Ali A.S.)

Some Mufasssireen have said that this Sura is the first to be revealed. It is this which was revealed on the night of Qadr. It is composed of the all the principals of the Qur'an in brief i.e.

- i) Tawheed
- ii) Promise of thawaab to those who obey Allah & warning to those who disobey.
- iii) Ibadah of Allah which strengthens the character.
- iv) Explanation of the true path and how to obtain the blessings of Allah here and in the hereafter.
- v) Stories of the people of the past who have obeyed Allah and of those who have disobeyed and those who went astray so as to gain lessons from them.

Thus it can be said that the 'whole' Qur'an was revealed on 'Laylatul Qadr' as the rest of the Qur'an is an elaboration of the five principals summarised in Suratul Hamd.

SURATUL FATIHA (01)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. (I begin) in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

2. All praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

All basis of Tawheed is in this aya and all other ayaat of Tawheed are an explanation of this aya.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

3. The Beneficent; The Merciful.

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

4. Master of the day of judgement.

All ayaat regarding 'Jaza' (reward); 'Saza' (Punishment); Hell Heaven etc... are explanations of this aya.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

5. You alone do we worship and You alone do we ask for help.

All ayaat about Ibada, it's niyya, how to pray.... etc. are elaborations of this aya

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

6. Guide us on the straight path.

The ayaat explaining the right path, the laws of that way of life, including morals & etiquettes are elaborations of this aya.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
الضَّالِّينَ

7. The path of those whom You have favoured; not those who earn Your anger nor of those who have gone astray.

The ayaat of the Qur'an describing stories of people who followed guidance; and of the people who didn't follow and the resulting punishment..... are elaborations of this aya.

This is why the sura is known as 'Ummul Kitab - The Mother of the Book ' just as a seed is known as a 'The Mother of a tree'.

BENEFITS OF RECITATION AND MEMORISATION

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said: “For everything there is an adornment and a decoration. The adornment of the Quran is a beautiful voice and tone.”

It was asked from the Rasulallah (S.A.W.) that which of the peoples voice in the recitation of the Quran is better. He said; “The voice of that person is better who while reciting the Holy Quran and his recitation reaches you, you feel that he is fearful of Allah.”

Rasulullah (S.A) said: “The most honorable and noble from amongst my Umma are the memorisers of the Quran and those who (stay) awake (for worshipping).”

Imam Sadiq (A.S) said: “Recite the Quran and memorise it. Allah will not punish the heart in which the Quran has been placed.(in it).”

And from amongst the Duas of Imam Sadiq (A.S): “O Allah, select and approve for us two works: to recite the Quran in a good manner and to memorize their Ayaat

The Qur’an is like a love letter from Allah (S.W.T.) to us. We should analyse it and ponder over it.

ISTIADHA – Seeking refuge

Istiadha is seeking refuge with Allah before starting anything where concentration is required.

An imperative seeker moves towards a protector. We have examples of this in the Hijra and also the invitation of Imam Husayn (A.S.) by the people to Kufa.

فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ
الرَّجِيمِ

So when you recite the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from the accursed Shaitan, (Qur'an, 16:98)

Why is Allah asking us to seek refuge?

In Suratu Muhammad, 47:24 Allah asks;

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not then reflect on the Quran? Nay, on the hearts there are locks.

There are 4 pillars of Istiadha, according to Adabus Salaa by Ayatullah Khomeini (A.R.). 3 of these are:

- **Al- Mustaidh** – One who seeks refuge.
- **Al- Musta'aadh bihi** – The one with whom refuge is sought. He has to be:
 - Powerful: If you are running away from something or someone, you have to go to someone who is greater than what you are running away from.
 - Knowledgeable (has ability, strategy and knowledge of what you are scared of).

- Able to hear
- On your side

- **Al- Musta'aadh minhu** – What we are seeking protection from.

قَالَ فَبِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَقْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ
الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

He said: As Thou hast caused me to remain disappointed I will certainly lie in wait for them in Thy straight path.

ثُمَّ لَآتِيَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ
أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ
شَاكِرِينَ

Then I will certainly come to them from before them and from behind them, and from their right-hand side and from their left-hand side; and Thou shalt not find most of them thankful.

Here we refer to the Maudhatayn (Suratul Falaq & Suratun Naas)

There are 5 things we seek refuge from:

1. From the evil of what He has created.
Allah has not created evil. He has given free will to each individual and evil is thus created by an individual out of their own choice.
2. Evil of utterly dark night – Metaphors of Qabdh & Bast.

When it is very dark, be it physically or in a metaphorical way, it is very hard to have feelings of gratitude. Therefore we ask refuge from dark days when we are inclined to think of only ourselves.

3. Evil of those who blow on knots – magic & relationships.
This relates to breaking up relationships. We are asking for protection from thinking or uttering words that may destroy relationships, whether they are relationships we have with other people or between two parties not connected with ourselves.
4. Evil of jealousy, greed & lying. Protection from jealousy and anger that lurks within the heart.
5. Evil of slinking Shaytan from jinn & humans – whispers**
In the simplest form, it is a thought or phrase that puts sparks of doubts in a person's mind.

Sources that feed 'waswas':

- ❖ Hirs (greed)
- ❖ Amal (expectation)
- ❖ Shahwat duniya (desires)
- ❖ Tahseel (acquisition)
- ❖ Bala (affliction)
- ❖ Kibr (pride)
- ❖ Tahqeer (to belittle others)
- ❖ Hubbud Duniya (Love of this world)
- ❖ Bukhr (greed)

**Islam repudiates whispering as anything verbalised worth saying.

AYA 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

In all written copies of the Qur'an, from the very commencement of it's been textually recorded; each sura with the exception of Suratu Tawba (Bara'aa) opens with the words

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The aya is repeated 114x in the Qur'an. It is the part of every sura except Suratut Tawba which is considered to be an ultimatum to the Makkans who despite having had the presence of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) amongst them did not accept the Rahma of guidance. In Suratun Naml the aya appears at the beginning and when Allah mentions the letter that Prophet Sulayman wrote to Bilquis starting it with

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

(27:30)

The first instance of reference to this aya is in Suratu Hud, when Prophet Nuh asks his people to embark, he says in the name of Allah be the moving and stopping of the ark, (11:41). The first aya to be revealed was an order to read in the name of Your Lord, (96:1).

This aya, is like a UN diplomatic passport which provides immunity in all countries, it provides ease of travel through the journey of life.

When you fall into an abyss (when you feel out of control) and you find there is no respite, say Bismillah & La hawla... and every tribulation will be removed.

If recited over water 786x and water served to members of the family/community, it will increase love within that family/community.

Write the aya on the exam paper before beginning for success in the exam. If difficult to write the whole aya, then just put a dot and know that is Bismillahir Rahamnir Raheem.

TASMIYYA – Naming

In naming things, the reasons may differ; people often take the name of one of their great and powerful personalities at the time of doing or beginning a work. By this association, it is believed, the work would achieve success, greatness and blessings; or that it would be a memorial to keep the named one's memory alive for ever. This is also observed in naming a child, a project, a house or an association - they give it the name of a deeply loved or highly respected person, so that his name would continue in this form; for example, a man names his son after his father, in order to perpetuate the father's memory.

This aya runs on the same line. Allah began His speech with His Own name - Great is His name - so that the ideas taught in this chapter be stamped by, and associated with it. Also, it teaches a lesson to humankind, showing them the perfect manner of starting all their talks and actions; it guides them to put the stamp of the divine name on all their activities; doing every work for the sake of Allah, associating it with His good names and attributes. In this way that action would neither be rendered null and void, nor remain incomplete; it has been started in the name of Allah, and negation and annihilation cannot reach that sacred name. Whatever is done for the

sake of Allah and performed in His name shall continue and will not perish. Everything, every work and every affair shall have its share of eternity - as much as it is related to Allah.

The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: "Every important affair, not begun with the name of Allah, shall remain incomplete...." The word al-abtar (translated here as "incomplete") means a thing whose end is cut off, an animal whose tail is severed.

Imam Ridha (A.S.) has said that Bismillah... is closer to Isme A'dham than pupil to white of eye.

As soon as a child learns this aya, there is immunity for the child, the parents and the teacher from the fire.

We begin with Bi – I ask in the name of (help of) – something that leads you to the next word:

ISM (Name).....

So what is in a name? A name is a mark or a sign which serves as a symbol for the recognition of a person or a thing. Imam Ridha (A.S.) has said: "When one says Bismillah – I put on myself simah which is Ibada!" What is simah? It is a mark. The moment you say Bismillah..., there is a simah on you, a mark. You have been stamped with the mark of Allah.

A name is not merely an arbitrary designation or a random combination of sounds. We recognise something or someone by their name. A name evokes a wide possible range of opinions and emotions. The more knowledge you have of a thing or a person, the stronger the emotion when the name is called out. For instance, the words, ma, mum, mother, mummy, evoke love and affection whilst the word ghost evokes fear, mystery.....

The power of a recognisable name is becoming increasingly valued and valuable. Consider the sponsorship at sporting

events and the advertisements you see everywhere. In this case, the name calls to mind goods of particular quality from a particular source.

When you remember someone's or something's name, you are paying it them a subtle compliment. You are saying to it them that they have made an impression on you and it gives them a sense of importance. Similarly when you do not recall someone's name it indicates their lack of impression on you.

The word 'name' is therefore synonymous with the word 'reputation' or 'character' when it comes to human beings.

The acquiring of knowledge about the attributes of Allah is closely related to our knowledge of recognition of Allah.

Just as we identify a writer from his/her style of writing and by particular words and phrases which are peculiar to him/her; in the same way every creation of Allah performs the following two main functions of identifying its Creator and projecting the attributes of it's Creator and recognising the purpose of it's creation.

The actual attributes of Allah are three; Hayy (Ever living), 'Alim (All Knowledgeable) and Qadir (Power over everything). All the other attributes are branches of these three.

The attributes of Allah cannot be separated from Him. e.g. 'Alim -The one who is knowledgeable. Whilst a human being acquires knowledge and is still a human being even without knowledge, Allah is knowledge itself. We try to understand Him through His Names but He is far superior to the names.

Whatever one thinks of Allah, He is not that. We must therefore think of Allah in terms of His attributes.

The word Allah in the Qur'an is the name of an essence of His 99 beautiful names and qualities like Merciful, Kind, Knowing.....

Whatever little information the human being can get about Allah can only be acquired through His names. Otherwise, we have no access. They know the name but not the named, like someone who is hungry and satisfies hunger by saying bread, bread. The benefit maybe by repeating it may increase the wish and effort to find bread.

Our whole word in essence is a name of Allah because nothing which exists can come into existence automatically.

These qualities and Names are therefore an infra-structure for human akhlaq because in Islam, the human being is the representative of Allah. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said:

تَخَلَّقُوا بِأَخْلَاقِ اللَّهِ

“Adopt the akhlaq of Allah”

In the same way, in order to arrive at the ideal society of the Qur’an, we must build our society with the Divine Qualities.

The human being in social life needs peace in his life and As-Salaam – Peace is one of the Names of Allah. A person also needs kindness and forgiveness for well being in individual life as well as in society and Ar-Rahmaan and Ar-Raheem are two of His names.

Society likewise in order to attain solidarity, power and confidence needs eiman –faith. Al-Mu’min –The believer is one of the Qualities of Allah.

In order to attain control over our affairs and independence we must develop strength within ourselves. Al-Qawiyyu -The Powerful and Al-Ganiyyu –The Independent (rich) are two more of His Qualities.

The human being and human society is distinguished by having creative ability, and inventiveness. Al-Khaliqu –The

Creator, Al-Baariu –The Originator, Al-Musawwiru –The Fashioner are among Allah’s other Names and Qualities.

If you were to play tennis, you would not go onto the court with bedroom slippers. Similarly, we have to learn and apply the right name and thus the right akhlaq in the appropriate situation.

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى
الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ

And He taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels; then He said: Tell me the names of those if you are right. (2:31)

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ
يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

And Allah's are the best names, therefore call on Him thereby, and leave alone those who violate the sanctity of His names; they shall be recompensed for what they did. (7:180)

All the Asmaaul Husna - qualities can be reflected in our souls individually and our society be filled with peace, purity, kindness, faith, confidence, honesty, trust, knowledge, awareness, dignity and might.

Each name of Allah is a Dua in itself. When reciting any one of His beautiful Names ponder over them and try to apply them to your life...

In brief, **that which we are, in the end is our real name with God.**

It is the application of these names that give us personalities that energise us spiritually. In the religious terminology of the world, we find that every human being in his/her own way and dialect, has given some beautiful name for the Rabb of the heavens and the earth.

When we say Bismillah... before giving a child medicine, in our mind we should be drawing energy for his Ism As-Shaafi.

Rumi is reported to have said:

“With us, the name of everything is its outward appearance. With the Creator, the name of each thing is its inward reality. In the eye of Musa the name of his rod was staff. In the eye of the Creator its name was serpent.”

ALLAH

The English and other allied European languages call their Rabb of the heavens and the earth. The word God comes from the Germanic word Gott meaning the supreme or ultimate reality, the being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is creator and ruler of the universe. (Extract from Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary) In the Latin dominated languages of Western Europe, the term used for God is Deus (Dieu in French, Dios in Spanish, Dio in Italian...). In all these Deus means heaven. The Hindu word for the Almighty God is ‘Pramatma’. In Sanskrit (ancient Indian language) ‘Atma’ means soul and ‘Pram-atma’ means the great and holy soul or the hol spirit. Despite the fact that Hindus believe that God is everything and everything is God, the classical name for this Supreme God is ‘Om’ which means Guardian or Protector. In

Jewish scriptures He is known as Yhwh/Elohim translated in English as the Lord God. Yhwh, Yehova, Yahuwa all mean the same thing. 'Ya' both in Hebrew and Arabic means Oh! 'Huwa' or 'Hu' means He in Hebrew and Arabic. So Yehowa means 'Oh HE! Now' let's look at the word Elohim which is made up of Eloh + Im. In Hebrew, the suffix 'Im' is a plural of respect. Eloh or Elah or Ilah means God.

The name 'Allah' solely belongs to the One and Only God. It combines all His names – attributes and needs no introduction from others, whilst the other names are recognised when added to the name Allah. 'Allah' is not given to anyone other Him, nor should it be ever used for anyone besides Him. It means 'One Who deserves to be loved' and 'into whom everyone seeks refuge'. Unlike the word God which can be made into Gods and Goddess, there is no feminine of the word Allah and neither is there a plural.

When you think of Allah, think of 5 meanings:

1. Qadeem – He did not become/was always there
2. Wahdaniyya – Unique. You can't compare Him to anyone or anything. His relationship with each one us is unique.
3. Baqa – Always will be. We should never lose hope in Him.
4. Mukhalafatan ul-hawadith – the Creator has no resemblance to the created.
5. Qiyam bi nafsih – Self existence without need

Suratul Ikhlas sums up the concept of Allah in a nutshell.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ
اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

(I begin) in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful.

1. Say ! He Allah is One.
2. Allah is He on Whom all depend.
3. He does not give birth and neither was He given birth to.
4. And none is like Him.

This sura was revealed to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) in Makka when the Jews were continuously asking him to describe the identity of Allah . As an answer to their queries this sura was revealed. It is said that one third of the Qur'an is an explanation of this very principle. Perhaps that is why the Prophet (S.A.W.) has said that the recitation of this sura once carries the thawaab of reciting one third of the Qur'an.

In this sura Allah uses the word **ahad** as opposed to wahid to depict his **oneness**. Wahid is the numerical digit 'one' in Arabic which is divisible and can also be preceded and followed by other numbers. **Ahad** depicts one in the sense of the absolute one which can neither be divided, multiplied, preceded nor followed.

In the beginning of the sura Allah denies the view of the mushrikeen who believe in more than one God or associate partners to God. He then denies the views of the Kuffar who

view that God is in need. Finally the view of the Christians and the Jews is denied in their thinking that God has a son or progeny.

The first sentence of the Kalima (Shahada) is the basis of the life of a Muslim. "There is no God." depicts that nothing in the Universe is superior to Allah and thus nothing in the world is to be worshipped, however powerful they may seem to be. It is only when one rejects (negates) every idea of nature worship, idol worship and human worship, that one is able to believe in the positive truth of tawheed.

The sentence has both a negative and positive aspect. Both aspects are instrumental in creating the belief that all human beings are equal. When nobody is superior, no one is inferior. The superiority lies only with Allah and the aim of life to get close to Him being accessible to one and all.

Imam Ali (A.S.) has said: Whenever an 'abd' of Allah says لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ , it ascends piercing every ceiling, erasing his/her sins as it passes by them till it reaches it's equivalent in good deeds."

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) has said:

"The testimony of لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ is the price of Janna"

He also said: "If one says لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ a hundred times before going to bed, Allah builds him/her a mansion in Janna, and whoever seeks Allah's forgiveness a hundred times before going to bed, his/her sins will fall down as leaves fall down from the trees."

In Suratush Shu'ara, Ayaat 78 to 82, Prophet Ibraheem (A.S.) introduces Allah as:

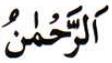
الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ
وَ الَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَ يَسْقِينِ
وَ إِذَا مَرَضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ
وَ الَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ
وَ الَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

“..Who created me, and it is He who guides me,
And Who feeds me and provides me with drink,
And when I am ill, He heals me,
And Who causes me to die and then gives me life (Again),
And Who, I hope, will forgive me my faults on the day of judgement.”

AR-RAHMAAN & AR-RAHEEM

There are a few questions that come to mind:

- If all His attributes are encompassed within the name Allah, why did He put Rahmaan and Raheem in the aya that is required to start every sura except Suratut Tawba and before starting any task?
- Both Rahmaan and Raheem denote kindness/mercy. Why did He use different form of the verb to say the same thing?
- How am I going to apply Rahmaan and Raheem to my life? Is it that important that besides anything else, those are the first two attributes that I must apply to myself?

Ar-Rahmaan 	He wills mercy (Rahma) for all His creation. “..My Mercy encompasses everything...” 7:156	Uses the verb pattern of fa’laan, which denotes abundance.	Recite 100x after every wajib salaa to cure forgetfulness, increase awareness, lighten a heavy heart and instil rahma in a hard heart.
Ar-Raheem 	This denotes exclusive mercy to those who voluntarily believe in Him...“He is kind & merciful to the mu’mineen” 33:43	Uses the verb pattern of fail, which denotes firmness and constancy.	Recite 100x after Salatul Fajr to receive compassion from all creatures.

What is Rahma? Where does it come from?

Rahma is a need met with the kindness, protection and nourishment that a mother offers her child.

When you see someone suffering from a deficiency which he cannot remove by himself, the reaction which you experience and which tells you to provide him with what he needs in

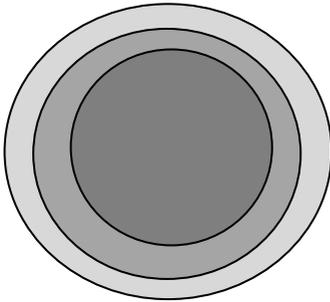
order to make up his deficiency, is called mercy. Ultimately, mercy means giving and bestowing to fulfill other's need. It is this latter meaning in which this attribute is used for Allah.

The two attributes have two concepts –

- i) Ar-Rahman relates to that all-encompassing mercy that is bestowed upon all creation. Ar-Rahmaan denotes abundance. The analogy of Ar-Rahmaan is compared to the ocean – the abundance of water.
- ii) Ar-Rahim is more appropriate for that mercy which shall remain for ever, the perpetual inexhaustible mercy that shall be bestowed on those who believe in Him. Ar-Rahim denotes the quality of firmness and constancy. When you see someone suffering from a deficiency which he cannot remove by himself, the reaction which you experience and which tells you to provide him with what he needs in order to make up his deficiency, is called mercy. Ultimately, mercy means giving and bestowing to fulfill other's need. It is this latter meaning in which this attribute is used for Allah. The analogy of Ar-Rahim is compared to attaching oneself to the ocean of abundance and building a pipeline which is able to channel back and forth the energy from that ocean.

- A human being will attach himself/herself to Allah by making sure that everything he/she does is in accordance to His will. The greater the attachment the greater that mercy is bestowed upon him/her.
- A human being would prove this attachment by the way he/she behaves with others in manifesting the Asmaul Husna.

- In order to test oneself as how much he/she is attached to Allah, one must start looking in the form of concentric circles:



The innermost circle would oneself and how we deal with ourselves.

The next circle would be how we deal with our parents.

The outer circle would be our community.

a) Looking at oneself:

Am I kind and merciful to myself?

We need to build a macro picture in our mind, which would be for example a good life in the hereafter. We know that this world is temporal and that each one of us will die. We know that there is life after death which is the actual life and this is what we are working towards. If we love ourselves, then we must be prepared to live our life in this world and in the hereafter in a way where Allah's Rahma is constant. Although this Rahma is in abundance, it will stop when we die unless we build channels between this Rahma and ourselves which are constant. If we are working towards this ultimate goal, we would ensure that we do not jeopardise our Aakhira by doing anything that is against the will of Allah. How do we ensure this?

There is a wonderful quote by Mester Eckhart; a German theologian who lived in the early 14th century:

“How long will men and women in the world keep drawing in their colouring books an image of God that makes them sad?”

It is a lie. Any talk of God that does not comfort you cannot be a talk of God.”

In Suratur Ra’d aya 28, Allah states:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا
بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah; now surely by Allah’s remembrance are the hearts set at rest.”

So why do we get agitated when we are told to pray, fast or follow certain edicts? Either there is problem in our understanding of what what we have to do or there is a problem in the basic concept itself. The very fact that we believe means that the basic concept cannot be wrong as it has touched our hearts. So it has to be our understanding and framing of the picture that we need to change.

Firstly we look at ourselves, do we forgive or do we hold on? When we don’t forgive, we are allowing somebody else to put us in their prison. There are many such things that stop us from progressing or getting to His Rahma.

How to test that we have rahma within ourselves:

An ideal life is a life where a human being is connected to Allah and that translates into a life which is connected to other people with kindness and mercy.

b) Our relationship with our parents:

Allah in the Qur’an say;

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا
إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا
تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, say not to them (so much as) "Ugh" nor chide them, and speak to them a generous word. Qur'an 17:23

Allah is telling us to worship none but Him and do ehsaan on our parents.

What is Ehsaan?

Ehsaan is making sure you give more than you need.

You may be the best human being on earth but if you don't show mercy towards your parents that goodness is of no use.

Then He goes on to say, "If either one of them becomes old, don't speak "oof" to them. "Don't chide them or mock them and treat them with respectful kind words." **This means that don't verbalise your differences to them and show the utmost respect.**

If you don't respect your parents, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: "You will not even smell the fragrance of Janna."

Then He goes even further and says:

وَإِخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ
رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

And make yourself submissively gentle to them with compassion, and say: O my Lord! have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little. Qur'an 17:24

Always important to appreciate the womb that bore you and the hands that protected you. The value of parents is so important that all your life if you do nothing except serve your parents, then you have made it.

Anecdote:

A young man came to Rasulallah (S.A.W.) and said to him; “Ya Rasulallah, there is a war going on and I would really like to go and to jihad.” Rasulallah (S.A.W.) sensed a hesitation in him and asked him why he was hesitating. He said; “I have a mother who has nobody else except me.” Rasulallah (S.A.W.) told him to go back to his mother and look after her as there is no better ibada than that, as Janna lies under the feet of the mother.

c) Our relationship with the community around us:

To look at the community in Arabia at the of Rasulallah (S.A.W.), The Arab world was the centre of literary knowledge, yet the holy Qur'an and ahadith call that period a period of jahiliya because there was no rahma. The Arabs were so stubborn that they would not let

go of their traditions. Rasulallah (S.A.W.) unified this community of people and thus was given the title Rahmatullil 'Alameen – mercy to the worlds. He changed the thinking of the people with his Rahmaniyyat.

If you have Rahma within you, it will seep out and affect those around you.

Imam Ali in his dua used to say: “You Allah are exactly as I would love You to be, make me as You would love me to be.”

The Rahmaiyyat of Allah, when applied to yourself means be merciful to yourself first. Make yourself to be as He wishes you to be and not what somebody else would want you to be. So whenever you say Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem, in your mind Rahman is an abundance of mercy available and Raheem would be the channelling of this mercy to yourself so that it remains with you. You would be able to this by manifesting Allah within you. Rasulallah used to say the person who is closest to Allah is the one who when you look at them they remind you of Allah, when they speak and the way way they behave reminds you of Allah.

AYA 2

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

All basis of Tawheed is in this aya and all other ayaat of Tawheed are an explanation of this aya.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

Al-Hamd means praise. It has been said that 'Hamd' is to praise someone for a good acquired by his own intention. 'Madh' (also translated as praise) is more general - it is used to praise even that good which someone is given without his will and power. If you praise someone for his benevolence, you may use either word - Hamd or Madh but if you want to praise a pearl for its luster, you may use the verb Madh, but not Hamd because the pearl has not acquired that luster by its own will and power.

Praise is an emotional condition particular to human beings. Real praise is nothing to do with greed or desire. It is instinctive that when a person comes across a work of beauty or splendour he/she automatically begins to praise it as a natural expression of awe and humility. This is the meaning of praise in the aspect of madh.

Another instinctive pure emotion is that of gratitude. This manifests itself in a human being whenever goodness comes to him/her from another and it is an acknowledgement of the favour.

Allah says in Suratur Rahman 55:60

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

Is the reward of goodness anything but goodness?

To paraphrase it – “Is the reward for working beauty other than the working of beauty?”

HAMD is neither simply praise nor gratitude.

It is a combination of praise and thanks and since Hamd is only for Allah; it incorporates a third concept of worship. Therefore the word ‘**HAMD**’ means **worshipful and thankful praise**.

It is a pure internal emotion within the human being whose source lies in the depths of the nafs.

Instances in the Qur’an where Alhamdulillah is used:

- Suratul Mu’minoan 23:28

فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنْتَ وَمَنْ مَعَكَ عَلَى الْفُلِكِ فَقُلْ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي نَجَّانَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

And when you are firmly seated, you and those with you, in the ark, say: All praise is due to Allah who delivered us from the unjust people:

- Suratu Ibrahim 14:39

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي وَهَبَ لِي عَلَى الْكِبَرِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ إِنَّ رَبِّي لَسَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ

Praise be to Allah, Who has given me in old age Ismail and Ishaq; most surely my Lord is the Hearer of prayer

- Suratun Naml 27:15

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ
لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

And certainly We gave knowledge to Dawood and Sulaiman, and they both said: Praise be to Allah, Who has made us to excel many of His believing servants.

The message from these examples is that we should use this phrase in every instance of our lives. It should become the foremost phrase in our vocabulary.

Anecdote:

A group of people came to our 4th Imam and said to him, “Yaban Rasulallah we are your shias. Imam replied, “Ok, so what do you say or do when you get something?” They replied, “We say Alhamdulillah.” Then Imam asked them, “What do you do when you don’t get anything?” They replied, “Nothing.” Then he asked them, “What do you do when something is taken away from you?” They said, “We complain a bit but don’t do anything much about it.” So Imam said that is just like the dogs of Madina. When you give them something, they bark. If you don’t give them anything they walk around doing nothing, if you take away something from them, they will bark a bit and then walk away. When our Shia are given something they say Alhamdulillah, and when something is taken away from them, they say Alhamdulillah and even if they don’t get anything, they will always say Alhamdulillah because they know in His hands is khayr.

There are another group of ayaat mentioned in the Qur'an not relating to human beings. They relate to other sorts of creation.

- Suratur Ra'ad 13:13 - Thunder

وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ ...

And the thunder declares His glory with His praise, ...

The aya doesn't say thunder praises Him. What this means is that when thunder does its job, those with knowledge will say Alhadulillahir Rabbil 'Aalameen.

- 42:5 – Angels

...وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِهِ...

...and the angels sing the praise of their Lord...

- Suratu Bani Israil 17:44

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ
وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا
تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا

The seven heavens declare His glory and the earth (too), and those who are in them; and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise, but you do not understand their glorification; surely He is Forbearing, Forgiving.

Everything that exists glorifies Him with His praise but to be able to praise Him individually requires knowledge.

Sahibe Ale Mizan, Allama Tabatabai, has said that it is very difficult for the human being to praise Allah as He ought to be praised.

If we were to ponder, every event and aspect of our life is something that requires praise whether apparently it seems good or bad because it is an opportunity of growth towards Him.

Looking at an aspect of Hamd.

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) is called both Ahmed and Muhammad. All the prophets before him were instructed to tell their people about the coming of a Prophet. In Suratus Saff Allah say;

وَإِذْ قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنِّي
رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ
وَمُبَشِّرًا بِرَسُولٍ يَأْتِي مِنْ بَعْدِي اسْمُهُ أَحْمَدُ فَلَمَّا
جَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ

And when Isa son of Marium said: O children of Israel! surely I am the messenger of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Taurat and giving the good news of an Messenger who will come after me, his name being Ahmad, but when he came to them with clear arguments they said: This is clear magic.

The Jews came to Rasulullah (S.A.W.) and asked him why he was called Ahmed and Muhammad, and which one of these was his name. Rasulullah (S.A.W.) replied that in the heavens he was known as Ahmed before his coming to the Earth

because Ahmed means the most praiseworthy. Now he is known as Muhammad – the praised one – because he has actualised his life.

In this respect, when we say Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Aalameen, besides everything else we are praising Him for he who brought the message.

رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

The root word for 'Rabb' comes from 'rababa' which may translate the word Rabb as cultivator, refiner, teacher; if it is derived from 'rabaya' then it may give the meaning of owner. However, these two concepts do not give the meaning of Rabb in its' totality. Rabb is not only the one who is the owner of the whole of existence but also delivers perfection to all creation. For the human being the Rabb is the Nourisher, Cherisher, and Sustainer who leads to perfection step by step if he/she will choose that path.

Rabb

There is no Isme 'Azam that beats this word.

Anecdote:

A slave woman came to our 6th Imam and said to him that they had found a tumour in her body and that they were going to cut off her limb off. Imam asked her if she knew Suratul Fatiha and replied that she did. He told her to recite the 3 Isme 'Azam from the sura regularly. These three Isma 'Azam are Ya Rahman, Ya Rabbiy and Ya Malik. Recite them regularly for any pain, tumour etc.

A few days later she came back to Imam and told him that everything had gone and that the tumour was not there anymore.

Prophet Musa is the most mentioned in the Qur'an because he talked a lot to Allah. He goes to Firawn to ask for his people to be allowed to go. Firawn uses psychological blackmail and reminds him that he was raised in Firawn's house and now he

has come to challenge him. Prophet Musa replied that he is now aware of the truth and will not be blackmailed by Firawn. Firawn asks him and Harun;

قَالَ فَمَنْ رَبُّكُمَا يَا مُوسَى

(Firon) said: And who is your Lord, O Musa?

قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى

He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to everything its creation, then guided it (to its goal). Qur'an, 20:49-50

This aya leads us to believe that the Rabb created us and then He guided us.

In the Qur'an, Rabb is referred to in human terms in both positive and negative ways.

An example of a negative is narrated in Suratut Tawba

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا
وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

They have taken their doctors of law and their monks for lords besides Allah, and (also) the Messiah son of Marium and they were enjoined that they should serve one Allah only, there is no god but He; far from His glory be what they set up (with Him). 9:31

Allah is criticising the Jews and Christian for taking their priest as Rabb and assuming that Prophet Isa is the son of a Rabb.

This reminds us that we should not accord another human being as our Rabb.

A positive example is where the only entities that have been granted, in human terms, the word Rabb are parents.

رَبُّ ارْحَمُهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

O my Lord! have compassion on them, as they brought me up (when I was) little.

This status should, however, not be abused by parents.

Anecdote:

Prophet Musa wanted to understand what Rabb was.

Allah tells him to watch the mother whose child was screaming. The mother does everything to soothe the child but the child would not calm down. Eventually, the mother gently places the screaming child into a pram and walks away for a minute and looks up at the sky. Allah tells Prophet Musa to observe her rahma towards the child. He tells Musa that He is 70x more Raheem than that mother. His is His Rububiyya.

Rububiyya

Allah's Rububiyya emanates from His love.

Allah was and there was no creation. He wanted to be known, out of love, and therefore He created. The highest creature in His creation is the human being, both in its form and in its spirit. We are, therefore, in evolutionary terms, at the pinnacle of His visible creation. We are also at the zenith in Allah's unseen realms. The prophets and the messengers who were sent as ideals of their respective times are in advance of us in this respect. We know historical or biographical information about only a few of the thousands that have been

sent by Allah to various people at different times as exemplars. Every age, every people had its messenger.

What completes the long line of prophethood, spanning the centuries since the world was created, is the advent of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) some fourteen centuries ago. It was during his time that tarbiya, education in the outer courtesies of living in society, combined with the enhancement of the inner being, was perfected. Tarbiya derives from the Rabb and His rububiyya.

There are hundreds of ayat in the Qur`an that describe the different aspects of the Rabb. These descriptions generally fall into **four** distinct categories.

- i) One set of ayaat describes **those who are guided**, consequently giving us a ready made prescription for how to conduct ourselves. One aya, for example, states: 'Say that all your worship, all your adoration, indeed your life and your death are for the Rabb' (Qur`an 6:162). This is the voice of those who are guided. They are tuned to the higher principle, knowing that even noble aspirations can only happen if they are part of the decree, if all the elements are right. The final words of the rightly-guided ones, the Qur`an says, can only be 'Praise belongs to the Rabb al-'alamin, the Lord of the universe,' (Qur`an 10:10) because there is nothing else to say. They have complete faith in what Allah has sent to them from His unlimited sources of knowledge, both of the seen and the unseen worlds, and commit themselves to following the example of the prophets and messengers. People who are guided ask Allah to overlook their mistakes. They know that the lower nafs will inevitably lead them astray. Indeed, Allah says in

the Qur'an that if He were to hold everyone accountable for the mistakes they have made, there would be nobody left on the face of the earth. In other ayat, Allah refers to 'those who are established in self-knowledge'. Here the reference is to those who are always vigilant and prepared for their inner light to guide them. As a result of this commitment and discipline, they are honored by Allah to witness the truth.

- ii) The next group of references to do with rububiyya in the Qur'an are concerned with **those who deny**. Allah advises us to call people to the right way, by Allah's permission, without force or threats. If those who are being called to submit reject what is said to them, we are not responsible for their situation. Some of those who deny are only seeking dunya - the power, success, and wealth of this world. Allah says that they will attain some of their desires with no share in the akhira, the next world.
- iii) The third category of verses relates to **calling on the Rabb**. We call upon Allah, the Essence, but most often we need to call upon our Rabb, because we need His Rububiyya to help us with our existential needs. We need to ask for patience, ask our Rabb to let our agitated heart be empty. We need to ask our Rabb not to make us victims of those who are unjust, and to remove afflictions from us.
- iv) The last and predominating category of ayat is where the **Rabb instructs us towards the right course of action**. It is the Rabb, our Guide and Source in even the most mundane situations in our lives, who gives us direction. If we obey His instructions and give Him due

respect, the Rabb will grant us 'two gardens' -Qur'an 55:46; one garden, or state, will be experienced in this world, and the other after we leave this zone of time and space.

If we take this Rububiyya in a positive way, we increase our attachment to Him. If we take it in a negative way and install it upon ourselves, then we become like Firawn.

فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى
فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى
فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَن يَخْشَى

Then he gathered (men) and called out.

Then he said: I am your lord, the most high.

So Allah seized him with the punishment of the hereafter and the former life.

Most surely there is in this a lesson to him who fears.

Whenever we say Alhamdulillah or use the word Rabb, we should ensure that we do not accord it to anyone nor do we ever put ourselves in a position when we accord it to ourselves.

In order to understand how Rububiyya connects us to Allah, we need to look at 4 facets of one who is connected to Allah: Imagine that you have placed yourself in a box which we will call Allah, because you have chosen to.

- **Rububiyya** – this encompasses all the qualities of Allah.
- The opposite of Rububiyya is **Ubudiyya** – means connected to Him. The English translation means slave, but a better definition would be “submitting to Rububiyya”.

The analogy of the fire and coal explains the term “submitting to Him”. Imagine that the human being is the coal and the fire is Allah’s Rububiyya. When the coal is away from the fire, it is just a piece of black carbon that you would not want to touch as it would leave an ugly black mark which is difficult to take off. As soon as the coal comes near the fire, it assumes the colours of the fire and provides energy in the form of heat and light and emulates the fire by emitting the energy. Once the coal is moved away from the fire, all the energy previously seen disappears.

Ubudiyya and Rububiyya are like the coal and fire. The nearer you are to Allah, the more you will assume His colours. Once you have assumed His colours, you want to spark off your rububiyya – the dormant spirit that lies within the nafs waiting to be energised.

- The spark that will energise this is **zhikrullah** – remembrance of Allah. The ruh requires you to repeat a phrase again and again to spark it off.
- This spark will instill within oneself something we call **insaaniyyat**, which is based on adaab – character & manner.

There are 10 things which are able to instil within us this aspect of ubudiyya.

1. Have a mind that is open to everything and is attached to Allah. Don’t be rigid in your ways.

2. Make a firm intention that you will not die with potential still left in you.
3. You can't give away what you don't have. Develop a character and start by showing Rahma to other people even if you have to force it to begin with.
4. Embrace silence. Ensure you take time out and meditate.
5. Let go of the past. Use it as a lesson to move forward.
6. You can't solve a problem with the same mindset you created it. You have got to think outside the box.
7. There is a lot of power in forgiveness. Learn to forgive because if you don't you have placed yourself in the prison of the person you have not forgiven.
8. Treat yourself like you are already what you want to be. Visualise your dream and don't let go of it.
9. Always treasure the majlis of Imam Husayn (A.S.). if you can't get to the mosque, have one at home. Even the recitation of a marthiya is sufficient.
10. Avoid all those thoughts that weaken your resolve.

The Rabb tells us to remember our pre-existential original fitra by means of which we will come to know our Rabb. We are instructed, first of all, to follow the rules laid out for us in this human zone that we inhabit. The Qur'an counsels us to follow the Rabb's guidance. We are also told to apply the right courtesy in our approach to the Lord of the Universe

- a) Calling upon Him with humility, as the Rabb 'does not accept the call of those who are arrogant' (Qur'an 7:55).
- b) One of the points of entry to the door that leads us to Allah is gratitude. Allah says: 'If you do not thank creation, you cannot thank Me.'

- c) We are to worship Him alone and abide by His natural laws created for our benefit, witnessing His mercy and Rububiyya over all creation.
- d) True submission to the Rabb may be achieved consciously with berr. Allah tells us that He has already shown Himself to us 'within ourselves'. Those who are berr are described in the Qur`an as 'those who reconfirm their origin'. We begin by being faithful to our biological, parental, communal and national origins to some extent, since to deny them is useless. If, for instance, we deny our parents, we deny our biological origin. Even if one's parents were the worst people, we need to forgive them and move on. We must kindle our sense of acceptance and faithfulness in this world so that we rekindle our total loyalty to the Creator of all worlds. Allah defines berr in the Qur`an as: 'Berr does not simply mean that you face east or west or do your salât in a certain way. Berr applies to he who has trust in, and knowledge of, Allah, His Day of Resurrection, the angelic forces, the books of reckoning and decree, all the prophets, and he who performs right actions' (Qur`an 2 :177).

If we sincerely follow these guidelines, our fitra will spontaneously show us what is wrong and right, as we are essentially of a righteous nature.

A great description of the Rabb and birr comes to us in a quotation from the Prophet Ibrahim in the Qur'an. When asked 'Who is your Lord?' he replies:

الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ
وَالَّذِي هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِي وَيَسْقِينِ
وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِينِ
وَالَّذِي يُمِيتُنِي ثُمَّ يُحْيِينِ
وَالَّذِي أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ لِي خَطِيئَتِي يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

'It is He who created me and it is He who will guide me. When I am hungry, He will give me provisions of food and drink. When I am out of balance or sick, He will heal me. It is He who will give me the experience of death and will also resurrect me. He is the One from whom I have the expectation (undeserved) that He will forgive me on the Day of Reckoning. I know that He is all-Forgiving' (Qur'an 26:78-82).

It is knowledge of one's Rabb and loyalty towards Him such as this that leads to the evolvement of the fitra in man.

AYA 3

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

3. The Beneficent; The Merciful.

Of these two attributes; one is related to the order of existence, the other to the particular world of human beings.

Recognising Allah as Ar-Rahman is to recognise the world as totally the expression of the divine wisdom. When we praise Allah with this attribute, one must have the vision of the world as being one of goodness, mercy, light for evil, calamities and darkness are all relative with no objective existence. The Qur'an directs us to praise Allah by these attributes so that we see the world in a positive way. These attributes are an implicit invitation to reflect the issues of divinity, leading to the confirmation of the possibility of such realisations.

As for the attribute of Ar-Raheem, it requires us to understand our position and location amongst all that exists in creation. With the freedom and choice he/she is granted one is able to choose one of two paths – “Indeed We have guided Him to the path; you may be grateful or ungrateful.” (Qur'an 76:3). One who has travelled the right path, the more sincere his/her actions, the more he/she is embraced by this particular mercy of Allah – that which traverses one to one's full potential.

In relation to the aya “Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raaje'oon”, Inna lillahi relates to Ar-Rahman, a coming of one into this world; we are all born with the same abundance of mercy. Wa inna ilaihi raaje'oon, relates to Ar-Raheem, a special mercy, because what we do with our life between birth and death will signify how much of His mercy out of Ar-Raheem we will get. The Attribute of Ar-Rahman, the Merciful, encompasses all of creation in its mercy, while the Attribute Ar-Rahim denotes an

aspect of the Rabb that operates on personal and specific levels and relates to individuals or situations. It also contains within itself an element of healing. When, for example, we are ill, we call upon Ar-Rahim for relief from our sickness. However, it is Ar-Rahman, in His infinite mercy, Who allowed us to be ill in the first place; for our own good even though we may not grasp the full purpose and meaning.

AYA 4

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

4. Master of the day of judgement.

All ayaat regarding 'Jaza' (reward); 'Saza' (Punishment); Janna & Jahannam are explanations of this aya.

This aya brings a question to one's mind; we ask Allah, "Ya Allah, You have already told us You are Merciful with an abundance of mercy, fixed and constant, now You scare us with this aya?"

He would reply, "When the human being sees My generosity, he/she forgets that he/she is accountable for the generosity I have given". When reciting this aya, we should bring to mind that one day we will have to stand there and be accountable for all our actions.

This aya can be recited in salaa in two ways – Maaliki yawmid deen and Maliki yawmid deen.

Malik in everyday language means king and is indicative of a political relation meaning he accords to himself a role of supervision and decision whilst maalik means owner and possessor, one who is in control, indicating an economic relationship meaning he may profit from the benefit of that thing. However, neither of these has an objective existence for both are simply arrangements and can lose effect whenever defining conditions are changed. At this level both words have entirely separate meanings.

In the case of Allah, the Creator of all existence and one in power over this existence the unity of ownership and sovereignty is very clear for the relation between possessor and possessed is real and objective.

To define Maalik we may say that it is one who is free by virtue of His own merits and characteristics, from depending on anything in existence; whilst everything in existence depends on Him.

Allah is the owner and sovereign both in the world and in the hereafter. He is not subject to time and space.

Yawm means day. This is not talking about a 24 hour day but a period of time.

Deen

The general perception of the meaning of the word deen is religion. Then you ask yourself, "What is religion?"

Is it something you believe in? Is it something that you practice?

Deen, religion, Islam is a total way of life. In the Qur'an Allah says:

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ

The only deen with Allah is Islam. Qur'an 3:19

This means total submission to Him.

Deen is a life transaction, what you have exchanged your life for.

What is Islam?

Here is a brief explanation as given to school children.

'I am a Muslim, my religion is Islam. This comes from the word salama, which means peace; therefore a Muslim is one who is at peace with his/her creator. We give an analogy to children of how to get peace at home. They will have peace at home if they listen to mum and dad. In the same way if we want peace with Allah, we need to listen to Him.

How do we do this? Does He whisper to us? No.

Do we get inspired? Maybe.

Allah has given us two guides:

One is within us, our conscience which actually resonates with the outside guides who teach us, the Ambiya and Mursaleen.

I believe that He sent Prophets, but as I am a Muslim, I believe that the last of these Prophets was Muhammad (S.A.W.). All these Prophets wrote the instructions in books called Tawrat, Injeel and Zabur, but I believe in the Qur'an. Qara'a means read, memorise, understand, apply and teach. Everything we do comes from the Qur'an. As the Qur'an is a book of instructions, we need teachers to explain therefore we have the life of the Holy Prophet to look at, which we call the Sunna of Muhammad (S.A.W.)'.

Now we have understood our deen, what does it tell us?

We need to look at Nahjul Balagha, where the perfect student of Rasulullah, Imam Ali (A.S.) says that the first thing we need to do about our deen is to understand it. How do we do this? Where do we begin?

The first we need to do is understand ourselves:-

“One who understands himself/herself understands his/her Rabb”.

- We have got to face the truth and challenge our beliefs. The laws of Allah are like the laws of gravity which never change. We have to accept the fact that these beliefs of Allah cannot change and we need to make adjustments accordingly.

Usool-e-deen

The core of Usool is Tawheed, Nabuwwa and Qiyama. We cannot understand Tawheed without Adala therefore it comes second. Nabuwwa cannot be understood without Imama because there cannot be an era without a guide on earth.

What is Tawheed?

- It is the belief that there is one God.
- The understanding of how to apply Tawheed in our lives.
- Our knowledge of the lives of the Prophets and Aemma and an understanding of their teachings.
- To understand the concept of Qiyama.

Qiyama

If we unveiled the blinkers from our hearts before they are unveiled for us we would see that real ownership and sovereignty of everything in existence is and always has been Allah.

لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ
فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp. (Qur'an 50:22)
We have to recognise the reality versus our perception of reality. We will see that the real ownership belongs to Allah, after it is too late.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) has said; "Die before you die!"

This means you need to close your eyes and think if life were to end for me now, what would be the reality of my situation?
We need to accept the fact that we are accountable of our actions.

You need to make yourself unique and reach a cornerstone of your ethics. To show who you are and what you do when nobody is watching. You need to accept responsibility for what you say and do. Cultivate the ability to look beyond the

immediate and to know the consequence of every single action.

Yawmud Deen refers to the day of accountability – Here are some glimpses from the Qur'an of Yawmud Deen.

يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يُومِئِدُ أَينَ الْمَفْرُ

Man shall say on that day: Where shall I fly to?

كَلَّا لَا وَزَرَ

By no means! there shall be no place of refuge!

إِلَى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمُسْتَقَرُّ

With your Lord alone shall on that day be the place of rest.

(Qur'an 75:10-12)

On that day each individual will be confronted with the truth of what he had thought to be his own separate existence. He had thought that there existed a me and a you, a him and Allah. But now, on this day, everything is in togetherness; separation no longer exists. The bewilderment is so engulfing that every self will only be concerned with its own reality.

The final resting place is with the Rabb, Who has brought this creation to its fullness and now to its greater fullness in another guise. Mustaqarr, resting place, is derived from qarra, to settle, and also, to decide, to make a statement. There is no longer the possibility of confused questioning as to "why?" or about the apparent duality of this existence.

نُبَأُ الْإِنْسَانَ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ

The human being shall on that day be informed of what he sent before and (what he) put off. (Qur'an 75:13)

To inform, naba'a, is the job of the nabiyy, the one who gives the news, the Prophet. It is he who tells us now of what is going to happen when each of us will know what he has put into his life and what he has postponed, when he will truly come to know himself. That is why we say he who knows himself now knows his Rabb. We are informed that the way towards knowledge of the self is through recognition of the lower self. That recognition itself will adjust one's turning more towards the higher self, and one will then begin to experience higher consciousness. One will have a clearer understanding of events that occur outside of oneself and of happenings that occur inside of one, as well as the relationship between the two. The human being will be closer to the knowledge of tawhîd.

بَلِ الْإِنْسَانِ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ

وَلَوْ أَلْقَىٰ مَعَاذِيرَهُ

Nay! Man is evidence against himself, though he puts forth his excuses. (Qur'an 75:14-15)

At all times man is a witness of himself. He has the capacity to witness because he has within him the light of consciousness, even though he may constantly give excuses. If he could see why he tries to justify his choices and actions, that perception would actually sharpen the light of his consciousness. If he could only admit that he is avoiding the truth because of his

selfish habits – if he could just say, "I have to have my coffee, I'm used to it and I'm enslaved by the habit" – there is a chance of him being cured. Otherwise, he will constantly defend himself and continue with the excuses of the nafs.

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الصَّاحَّةُ

But when the deafening cry comes, (Qur'an 80:33)

This âya describes one of the first conditions of the last day, of reckoning. As-sâkhkhah is the final call. It is what closes off the hearing so that nothing makes sense any more. The deafening cry heralds the end to the systems of perception and comprehension as we understand them. It is sound that drowns out all other sounds, like the blasts of a trumpet blowing away the earth's solidity.

يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ

وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ

وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ

The day on which a man shall flee from his brother, And his mother and his father, and his wife and his children (Qur'an 80:34-36)

When that day comes, man's condition will be one of intense disorientation, as if he has run away from the brother he loves, who is like him and has helped him, who has given him a reason to exist by serving and helping.

When the physical foundation for existential stability disintegrates, all other forces, powers and links that

maintained the harmony and equilibrium of life on earth will collapse. All relationships will disintegrate. A brother will not recognize a brother, and every self will be centered on itself. The urgency and disruption of that time is beyond our normal comprehension. In circumstances when mother nature is no longer reliable, man will also flee from his biological mother. The security of any past established relationship is rendered meaningless in the face of mass upheaval..

لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ

Every man of them shall on that day have an affair which will occupy him. (Qur'an 80:37)

The day of reckoning is a great shock because it is the beginning of a new life, a new experience. All the dead will be resurrected, everything will become clear and exposed, and all the little things that we considered insignificant are clearly magnified and revealed to be important. The consequences of all the things we have done in this existence, which we thought could be forgotten about or were of no consequence, will be exposed. We will clearly see in a subtle form all the people in this life who reminded us of Allah and the next life but whom we dismissed. All the accounts that we have not settled in this world, all our lack of awareness, all our hypocrisies, all those years of only having concerned ourselves with our material existence, all the different idols we worshipped and the different excuses we gave – they will all instantly appear before us.

As a result of these events there will be major havoc. Everybody will be concerned about himself. Nobody will be able to remember his offspring or his mother, father, wife or

wealth; everyone will be concerned about his own state and situation. The end will be so sharp and decisive that there will be no possibility of any crutches or aids – each will be on his own.

وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ مُّسْفِرَةٌ

ضَاحِكَةٌ مُّسْتَبْشِرَةٌ

(Many) faces on that day shall be bright, laughing, joyous.
(Qur'an 80:38-39)

The face of the one who is in tawhîd, who has unified himself with destiny – who has lived for Allah, and is returned to Allah – will on that day be distinguished by its bright and unveiled light. Musfirah (shining bright) means that their abandonment is clear on their faces. The verbal root of musfirah means to unveil, reveal, expose, and travel. When one travels, he is exposed and vulnerable; he reveals himself to the rest of the world. The man of tawhîd will joyously reflect his reality.

وَوَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَلَيْهَا غَبَرَةٌ

تَرْهَقُهَا قَتَرَةٌ

أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكٰفِرَةُ الْفَجْرَةُ

And (many) faces on that day, on them shall be dust, darkness shall cover them: These are they who deny the truth, the wicked. (Qur'an 80:40-42)

Other faces on that day will be covered with dust. They will not yet have shaken the dust of their nafs (lower self) off their souls. They will still be tarnished with the dust of what they have inscribed on their hearts. On this day they will be unable to sing the song of Truth or even to reflect it.

The purpose of this existence is for us to stop singing our own songs so that the one and only song bubbles up through our hearts. But as we know, we constantly play our own compositions. Those on the dark side of denial shall be covered with dust, exhausted. This occurrence implies that the gold within them – their reality – has not been mined. They have not seen their true reality because they have allowed dust to settle thickly over it. Tired with the weight of the dust, they are the unbelievers who wreaked havoc on this earth.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL TAWHEED

The principal of tawheed is Islam is of two types. Nazhari (theoretical) and ‘amali (practical). Nazhari tawheed means to know that Allah is One. ‘Amali tawheed is related to the personal integrity of shaping within one’s actions a unity and single focus – direction towards the limitless One.

In other words, theoretical tawheed is to recognise the oneness of Allah whilst practical tawheed is for the human being to become a single unified entity.

The first 4 ayaat are related to **theoretical tawheed**. The words and phrases from the beginning of the sura until ‘Maliki yawmid deen’ constitute an arrangement of topics in the knowledge of Allah. He is Allah’, He is ‘Rahman’, He is ‘Raheem’, He is ‘Maliki yawmid deen’. He is the only Essence worthy of Hamd.

Starting our salaa by calling Allah with these attributes is in reality a form of displaying and reviewing our knowledge of Him, with each name or attribute performing the role of a subject heading.

The knowledge that He is **Allah**, the Perfect Essence deserving of all praise and to whom all creation is directed is to recognise and acknowledge that there is One who is absolute perfection and all things are from Him, directed towards Him and headed towards Him.

Knowing that He is **Rahman** means realising that the whole of existence is an expression of His mercy and that nothing comes from Him except goodness and mercy. Anything that relates to the divine is nothing but mercy and goodness. Evil and adversities are negative and relative within things – not objectively a part of them.

When a human being calls on Him by the attribute **Raheem**, he/she is not only aware of that all creation is a manifestation of divine mercy but also that the order of the return of all towards Allah is a system of mercy and kindness. And this is the meaning of Allah's mercy preceding His anger and punishment, for adversities and afflictions are realised as mercy...

Allah's attribute A-Rahman signifies the coming from Him (the arriving aspect) and on the other hand Ar-Raheem denotes the returning aspect (the towards Him dimension).

Allah being **Maaliki yawmid deen** brings us a different understanding. Here one understands that firstly that there will be a day of accountability whose sovereign and owner is solely Allah,

These ayaat are related to the categories of knowledge. Knowledge is a preparation for becoming. In order to become we must know and understand.

The next aya now leads us to **practical tawheed** – to become a whole.

AYA 5

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

5. You alone do we worship and You alone do we ask for help.

All ayaat about Ibada, it's niyya, how to pray etc. are elaborations of this aya.

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ

Ibada

In 'Arabic when something is totally submissive with no opposition or resistance it's condition is said to be ta'abbud (worshipful). A mu'abbad (a worshipful person) is therefore one who is at peace and obedient with no trace of resistance or rebellion. This is a condition that a person should have only in respect to Allah. With respect to other than Allah; tawheed means to be in a condition of rebellion and disobedience. Thus the human being must at all times comprise two apparent contradictory conditions – total submission to Allah and total resistance to other than Allah – this is the meaning of You and You alone do we worship....

'Ubudiyya is based on the development of the rational self through outer action. Ultimately this is the recognition that we are of no significance unless it is because of the divine program that began before our involvement in it. We are already slaves to this reality. The use of the word 'slave' however, implies oppression and exploitation, which is not true of the Arabic word 'abd, from which comes 'ubudiyya, servitude or obedience to Allah. There is true proximity between the Rabb and the 'abd, but never a union as such. It is like coal and fire. When coal is close to the fire, it takes on

the qualities of the fire and exhibits these to the onlooker. It is all light and brilliance. If the coal is removed from its proximity to the fire, it becomes just that - a lump of coal.

Real submission and faith leads to real 'ubudiyya by grooming and proper upbringing, tarbiya, in the real sense of education. True education means learning a few skills to earn one's keep, and ultimately about knowing the purpose of our existence, and preparing for death and beyond.

The Rabb comes into existence from the One Source, the Essence, only as an intermediate step to bring about the orchestration of existence, paving the way for the 'abd to be brought up to his or her full potential.

'Ubudiyya, for its part, makes us recognize that we have within us the original blueprint that enables us to develop into true reflectors of the Rabb, whilst also training us to exercise our faculties and senses to gain the greatest benefit from them.

As human beings, we only rely on the 5 main senses and forget that we have a sixth sense. We need to develop this sixth sense by seeking the soul. In order to hear the soul, we need to be able to do the following:

- Acknowledge that there is a struggle, the inside wants to go towards Allah but the outside is resisting.
- Always aim to relieve the tension between the body and the soul, not by negating one but by accepting it, acknowledging it and finding a solution. Accept that the body feels good by doing things it shouldn't. We should therefore be able to try and tell it what is right and wrong for it.

Recognise that you are not a body with a soul in it, but a spiritual being who is encased in a body. This is the first step

to changing your thought process and continually reminding yourself this. Develop a sense which gives you the ability to listen your soul and the best way to do this is Salaa.

We make a lot of effort to ensure our physical wellbeing such as yoga, meditation and life coaching. All these concepts are already encompassed in the salaa.

SALAA – Extract from Adaabus Salaat by Imam Khomeini (A.R.)

Salaa is the Me'raaj of the Mu'mineen.

Salaa will lift you higher and take you on to another level.

Get your salaa sorted out and the duniya will get sorted out for you.

To pray on time will make your soul open up and give instructions to your body and you will see the success in your life.

TIME OF SALAA

The wives of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) have said that whenever Salaa time approached it was as though Rasulullah (S.A.W.) had disconnected from us. Imam Ali (A.S.) used to tremble and when asked why he said: "This is the trust which was offered to the heavens, earth and mountains and they refused to bear it."

The companions would go to Bilal as the time of salaa approached and would say "Relive us Bilal! We want to access the shores of Rahma."

One should know the time of the commencement of Salaa. If for any reason you are unable to pray on time, at that time wherever you are raise your hands in dua' and take time out.

WUDHOO (Purification)

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) was asked: “How can I increase my presence of heart in salaa?” He replied:” You must concentrate on your wudhoo”

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) says: “ When you intend to do wudho, proceed to the water as you proceed to the Rahma of Allah for Allah has made water the key to His proximity and dua and a guide to the court of His service. Just as Allah’s Rahma purifies the sins of His abd, water purifies the outer najasat”

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) has said:” A sincere mu’min is like water.”

A group of Jews came to Rasulallah (S.A.W.) and amongst the questions they asked was: “Tell us O Muhammad! Why are the organs of wudhoo the cleanest parts of the body?”

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) replied: “When Shaytan whipered to Adam (A.S.) he came near the tree to look at it and lost face. He stood up and walked towards it – the first step to sinning, then he took with his hand the fruit and ate of it...As soon as he realized his mistake he put his hand on top of his head and wept.. Allah accepted his tawba but made it wajib on him and his progeny to purify these 4 organs. The face to be washed because it looked at the tree, the hands to be washed to the elbows because they took the fruit of the tree, the head to be wiped as he put his hand on top of his head in regret and the feet to be wiped because with them he walked to the tree.”

When doing wudhoo, try to learn and recite the dua for wudhoo. If you have not yet learnt it, try to have the following thought process whilst doing wudhoo.

FACE: I will not turn towards that which is deceiving me and taking me away from the Akhirah.

HANDS: I will not reach out to do anything that is wrong.

FEET: I will not let them take me away and I will always ask for Rahma when doing masah.

PLACE OF SALAA

As you approach the place of salaa, He asks: "Where have you been. I have been waiting for you."

Best place to pray is in a masjid...

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) has said: "When you arrive at the door of the masjid, know that you come to the door of a great king...Confess to His presence your inability, shortcomings, humility and poverty....Expose your secrets to Him and know that there is nothing hidden from Him...Empty your heart of all the occupants that keep you away from your Rabb. He does not accept except the purest and sincerest...If He finds your heart truly turned to Him, He will look at you with kindness, mercy and leniency.... Saying "Who is there who answers the call of the distressed when he calls and removes the evil..."
Suratun Naml 27:62

FACING QIBLA (Orientation)

إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ

Surely I have turned myself, being upright, wholly to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists. Suratul An'aam 6:79

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) “When you face qibla, despair of the world and what is in it and of the creatures and of what they are bust with. Empty your heart of what takes your attention from Allah... and stand on the foot of the fear and hope.”

This brings to mind that you have to be focused towards a direction in life. When you put down your sajdagah:

- Think that you are made of this and will be going back into it. You have no right to walk on it as if you are the only person that exists on it.
- When you put down turbate Husayn, immediately say; “Assalaamu Alayka ya Aba Abdillah!”

CLOTHES OF SALAA (Covering oneself)

Cover yourself in His generosity and forgiveness. Imagine donning the clothes of taqwas. Envelope yourself in His Rahma.

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) says: “When you put on your dress of salaa, remember Allah the concealer of your sins by His Rahma. Clothe your interior with truthfulness, as you dressed your exterior with your dress...Do not uncover anyone’s faults, as Allah has covered your greater faults. Attend to your own faults, and forgive that whose stae and affairs do not concern you...”

ADHAN & IQAMA

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) has said: “When you recite the adhan and iqama, two rows of angels will perform salaa behind you... if you recite the iqama alone, one row of angels will perform salaa behind you...”

A house in which adhan is recited, will never be lonely.

The adhan and iqama is an announcement to all the body parts, energies, visible and invisible powers and angels to the meeting of the heart with Allah.....

Recite aya 162 of Suratul An'aam,

إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Lord of the worlds;

INTENTION

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) has said: "And intention is superior to action, or, rather, intention is the complete reality of act itself."

The success or failure of an act depends on the intention with which it is done. Niyaa is the base of a deed, according to it one's deed will either be good or bad, sound or unsound.

The principal positions of salaa are three – Qiyam, Ruku and Sujood.

QIYAM

When standing in Qiyaam, abandon self conceit and selfishness. Think that you are standing in front of Rabbil 'Aalameen and therefore you are nothing. This is the Creator you are looking up at and you want to draw from that divine energy.

RUKOO

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) has said: “The rukoo is politeness and the sujood is proximity. When the aya of Suratul Waqia 56:74 was revealed; Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said – “Recite this in your rukoo”

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

Therefore glorify the name of your Lord, the Great.

SUJOOD

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) has said: “By Allah, he will not be a loser who performs the sujood as it should be even for a single time in his life....So let your sujood be that of a submissive humble person who knows he has been created from dust.....” “The concept of sujood has been made by Allah as a means to get close to Him with the heart....”

When the first aya of Suratul A’laa was revealed, Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said “Recite this in your sujood.”

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High... 87:1

When you go down for the first sajda, think ‘I can’t get close to You as there are so many things stopping me from getting closer to You’. That is when you get up and ask for Istighfar and think ‘Ya Allah I know I can’t get close to You because things are not sorted out and therefore I am asking for forgiveness’. Then go down for the second sajda. This is the sajda of proximity. You are so close to Him, you don’t want to get up. You are now in the world of wahdaniyyat. It is a place to ask Him. It is mustahab to prolong the sujood. Imam Ali (A.S.) has said that if the human being knew the blessings descending on him in sujood; he would not lift his head.

The secret of sujood is annihilation.

TASHAHHUD (Testifying)

At the beginning of salaa in the adhan and iqama it is preparation to enter in the situation of eiman and t'aqquli – contemplation. After sujood it is tahaqquqi – Realisation of the truth and it's confirmation. As the sujood is annihilation, one comes to the world of wakefulness with tashahhud and salaam.

SALAAM

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) has said: "The meaning of the salaam at the end of each salaa is security... As-Salaam is one of the attributes of Allah. He trusted it to His creatures so that they may use its concept in their transactions, trusts.....If you wish to use the salaam in it's proper place... you must be God conscience, and your religion, heart and mind should be secure..... Both your friend and your enemy should also be secure from you....."

In a single phrase **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** practical tawheed is manifested in a profound way – ibada with purity of intention. The exclusivity given by the word 'Iyyaka' points to the exclusiveness of Ibada to Allah and the plural pronoun in 'we worship' is focused on the construction of the human being which can only be within the realm of others – in a society.

There are 7 things which stop us from reaching to this stage of ibada by causing resistance:

1. Things – collecting of materialistic things.

If these become a focus of your life, you need to de-clutter. Jewellery that is sitting in the bank vault will be

of no use. It is said that if you collect things for the sake of it, you will be branded with them on the Day of Judgement.

2. People – Loving someone doesn't mean holding on to them. It means giving. When you love somebody, you need to let them be.
3. The past – Deal with the present. You cannot change the past but you can the present.
4. Your physical form. You get obsessed with your physical body.
5. Wanting to be always right – We always want to be right. Allah is the only one Who is always right. If you want to convey His rightness, don't do so with anger or resentment.
6. Money
7. Winning – Life is not about comparisons but trying your best. Once you know that you have tried your best, know that in the eyes of Allah you have won.

Seeking Help **إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ**

This phrase is informative of tawheed in seeking help i.e. the seeking of help only from Him and relying only on Him.

It must be pointed out that Allah has created us as creatures in need of each other and the recommendations in Islam continually command us to co-operate (in Arabic the word used in aya 5:2 is ta'aawanu from the origin of 'awn which means 'help'. The meaning the phrase delivers is that the human being's final and ultimate reliance, upon which the human heart depends, must be Allah and those from whom one seeks help in the world are to be recognised as His means. Even the human being himself and his own abilities are all means Allah has created and put at his disposal but which are at all times in the hands of Allah.

When you are able to do something for someone, and you have done it with the niyya that you don't want anything in return, know that you have become a wasila.

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) in one of his campaigns was resting upon a nearby hill when an fully armed enemy soldier came across him and called out – "Is it you Muhammad?" Rasulullah replied in the affirmative and the man asked "Who can now save you from my hand?" Without hesitation Rasulullah said: "Allah!" The man took a step backwards to deliver a blow from his sword when he stumbled and fell. Rasulullah (S.A.W.) got up and stood over the man with his sword asking "Who will save you from me?" The man replied "Your nobility!" and Rasulullah (S.A.W.) let him go.

The phrase is therefore recognition by the human being that all means of help are ultimately from Allah.

Ibada is not just for the musalla, it is a way of life. When we ask Him for help, we call that dua'. Allah in the Qur'an says;

وَأَتَاكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُ وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ
لَا تُحْصُوهَا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ

And He gives you of all that you ask Him; and if you count Allah's favors, you will not be able to number them; most surely man is very unjust, very ungrateful.

You just have to ask without putting any time restraints or restrictions because His vision is better than ours. Even if a dua' has not been answered immediately, know that it is waiting to be answered somewhere.

Anecdote: There was a man who died and was being shown around all the places in Janna. He was shown his house and all the rooms within that house. There was one room in the house which was filled with presents. It was like Eid 100 times over. When he went to look at the presents, he saw that all the labels had his name on them. He thought this is good. He opens the presents and says these are a better version of what he had asked for. The angels told him that if they had given him these in the world, they would have been old models so he has been given the most up to date models which will never date.

A person came to the 6th Imam and said; "My dua' just does not get answered however hard I try. I have tried every 'amaal but it just doesn't work and I would like this dua to be answered now". Imam told him that if he needed something so badly, he should pray as though he was drowning. And

should recite salawaat before and after the dua' and always ask the dua' with a wasila. The man asked why and Imam directed him to the Qur'an:

وَقَطَعْنَا لَهُمْ آيَاتِي الْعَشْرَةَ آسْبَاطًا أُمَّمًا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ
مُوسَىٰ إِذِ اسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ أَنْ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ
الْحَجَرَ فَانْبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ
أُنَاسٍ مَشْرَبَهُمْ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ
الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا
ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

And We divided them into twelve tribes, as nations; and We revealed to Musa when his people asked him for water: Strike the rock with your staff, so outflowed from it twelve springs; each tribe knew its drinking place; and We made the clouds to give shade over them and We sent to them manna and quails: Eat of the good things We have given you. And they did not do Us any harm, but they did injustice to their own souls.

Why didn't Allah just answer the dua' of the people? He could have sent down the rain direct but He did so through Musa.

ISTIGHFAAR

Istighfaar before a dua'.

فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا

Then I said, Ask forgiveness of your Lord, surely He is the most Forgiving:

يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا

He will send down upon you the cloud, pouring down abundance of rain:

وَيُمْدِدْكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ
وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

And help you with wealth and sons, and make for you gardens, and make for you rivers.

Sins that stop dua'

1. Not respecting one's parents.
2. Delaying salaa
3. Hypocrisy towards mu'mineen

AYA 6

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

6. Guide us on the straight path.

The ayaat explaining the right path, the laws of that way of life, including morals & etiquettes are elaborations of this aya. Show us the direct way. A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. A straight line is also one point traveling in only one direction. Therefore, you ask to be shown the most direct route towards this knowledge of acquiring our perfection (full potential). Some aspects to be considered are:

- i) The path of perfection is one to be found – not one that needs to be invented.
- ii) All beings are progressing along a creational qahri (involuntary path) which eventually leads to Allah. “Be aware That all affairs return to Allah” Suratul Baqara 2:211
- iii) There is only one path that the human being must choose (freedom of no choice) “O human being! Indeed you are striving towards your Rabb, striving so that you shall meet Him.” Suratul Inshiqaaq 84:8
- iv) Siratul Mustaqeem has a defined direction from the start. It is not a path of twists and turns which passes from one contradiction to another.
- v) The path exists within one’s own being. Within the essence of the human being there exists the natural instinctive pre-disposition (fitri) towards perfection just as within the acorn lies the predisposition to become an oak tree.
- vi) The straight path is the path of least resistance.
- vii) Despite this predisposition the human being needs a guide.

Guidance

In order to proceed on the right path a human being requires guidance.

There are two forms of guidance:

1. Jabr – A guidance where there is no choice, e.g. the sun, planets and moon do not have a choice but to follow a certain order. The bee is inspired to go to the flowers in order to make honey whilst an acorn does not have a choice but to grow into an oak tree.
2. Ikhtiyaari – Voluntary, have a choice, freewill.

An example of choice of freewill.

Prophet Musa goes to Firawn to ask for his people to be allowed to go. Firawn reminds Prophet Musa that he was raised in Firawn's house and now he has come to challenge him. Prophet Musa replies that he is now aware of the truth and will not be blackmailed by Firawn. The rest is narrated in the ayaat of Suratut Taha 20:49 & 50:

Although we have a voluntary form of guidance, it is divided into 2 types:

- i) Zhahiri (apparent)
- ii) Baatini (hidden)

The hidden guidance manifests itself in the form your zameer (nafs). The inner voice that tells you many things such as to wake up when it is time for fajr salaa. The more you listen to this inner voice, the more it will talk to you.

Shaykh Abbas Qummi, author of Mafatihul Jinan, has said that on the day he had not made any mistakes, the voice inside him would wake him up softly for fajr salaa the following morning and on days when he has made a few mistakes the

same voice would be very harsh and would shout at him to wake up.

We need to pay more attention to this inner voice and the way to do this to take some time out and first try to listen to the quieter voices around us, such as the humming of the refrigerator, then quieten this down even further and try to listen to your own breathing. When you get to this stage, you will be able to hear the nafs. It is extremely essential to have these quiet times built in to our daily routine for our inner voice to talk to us. From this same voice comes Istikhara.

Rasulullah (S.A.W.) has said seek khayr before you do anything. The best person to do istokhara is oneself.

Pray 2 rakaat salaa. After salaa, go into sajda and recite, "Astakhirubillah 101x (I seek the best from Allah). At this time listento that quiet voice within you and it will point you in the direction you need to take. Recite tasbee of "Ihdinas siraatal mustaqeem".

The zhahiri (one you can see) guidance comes in the form of Rasulullah (S.A.W.).

SEERAH OF THE PROPHET (S.A.W.)

- **Jeffrey Katzenburg** – producer of the ‘Prince of Egypt’ said :“ We had only 88 minutes to tell the life of Moses; we’ve edited God but we have not re-written him” I have **30 mins** – to talk of a man whom the Encyclopedia Britannica calls the most successful of all religious personalities of the world. A man who moved not only empires, dynasties, legislations and armies but millions of human beings in the 1/3 of the then inhabited world- more than that he moved broke idols, beliefs, ideas, deeds and souls – his ambition entirely devoted to overthrow false deities and to establish the unity of the one God – 4 words – LAA ILAHA ILLA ALLAH
- The word ‘**seerah**’ from root word saa’ir – meaning movement. In this context means the method and manner by which the Prophet (S.A.W.) behaved in different situations.
- Its like looking at a **star filled sky** – wondering which star to pick and talk about – each one twinkling and saying talk about me – there is Muhammad the Prophet, Muhammad the Reformer, the emancipator of women, the refuge for orphans and the oppressed, the physician, the statesman, the intellectual, the judge, the nation builder, and the North star saying Muhammad – the most perfect example of a human being.... 33:21 Laqad kaana fiy rasulullahi usawatun hasana.....
- He was born in Makka on the 29th of August, 570 CE/17 Rabi ul Awwal (Friday), and when he died at the age of 63, (40-13-10) the whole of the Arabian Peninsula had changes from paganism and idol

worship to the worship of One God; from tribal quarrels and wars to national solidarity and cohesion; from drunkenness and debauchery to sobriety and piety; from lawlessness and anarchy to disciplined living; from utter moral bankruptcy to the highest standards of moral excellence. Human history has never known such a complete transformation of a people or a place before or since.

- **Media manipulation, preconceived ideas** tend to make us fail to recognise real truths although we cannot change truths – The Prophet (P.b.u.h.) said “If you have a pearl in your hands and people call it a peanut it will not cease to be a pearl” – Recent visit teacher training of R.E. teachers – symbols near names of each Prophet – Adam - tree, Noah - ark, Jonah - whale, Abraham – broken idols, Moses – parting of sea, Jesus – curing the sick, Muhammad – sadly a sword – God in the Qur’an calls him *Rahmatul lil aalemeen* – Mercy to the worlds – whole seera – way based on compassion – I believe that the comforter mentioned by Jesus in the chapter of John in the Bible refers to Prophet Muhammad too (18:7-14, 15:26, 14:26)
- **Let me tell you about this amazing man** – He was born an orphan but belonged to the noblest of the Arabian tribes, his genealogy accepted as the most righteous, yet he said “**No honour is nobler than humility and kindness**” He would say repeatedly – “There are 5 things I will not give up until death – eating with slaves on the ground, riding a donkey without a saddle, milking goats with my hands, wearing coarse clothes and greeting children” When he was asked – Ma

AdDeen? Answered – Husnal Khulq Man asked from right, left, back, front – Eventually Prophet (S.A.W.) with a deep look said – Amma tafaqqahu (why don't you understand?) Huwa anlaa taghdhab – Religion is defined not to get angry! Aristotles challenge – “Anyone can become angry – that is easy. But to become angry with the right person to the right degree at the right time for the right purpose and in the right way – that is not easy.” Danile Goleman may have coined the word Emotional Intelligence and its acronym as EQ but it was Muhammad 'Arabi who first declared that the cleverest of human being was the one who had SQ – Spiritual Intelligence. The most wretched he said were those who displayed – 1) Dry eyes 2) Hard heartedness 3) Excessive greed 4) Persistence in sins

- **He abhorred nationalism** – “Human beings from Adam to this day are like the teeth of a comb, there is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor for one colour over another except with God awareness” .
- **His opponents created enmity with him** – wronged him, spoke ill of him, harassed him, yet he would say “Oblige your brother by warning them, correct them by showing favours and giving them favours” e.g. women who through garbage on him every time he passed her house to walk to the mosque, when one day she did not he enquired about her, on learning she was ill he visited her.
- **He was always first to greet others** – He spoke in short, meaningful sentences and was never seen or heard to interrupt anybody's speech. He never spoke with a morose face, nor did he ever apply rough,

awkward words. He avoided sitting at prominent places in gatherings – rather sitting in a circle to avoid any distinction, so much so that visitors had difficulty identifying who he was, visited the poor and sick – no housework was too low or undignified for him- ate the simplest of foods yet

- **When it came to bravery there was no parallel** - his most perfect student and successor – Ali (A.S.) would say “ When we used to meet the enemies and battle was at it’s peak, we would stand behind Muhammad when our hearts wavered – He was always closest to the enemy” and battles – he instructed his people never to start war and to fight only when they were attacked first- if the enemy lost his orders were not to chase the fleeing soldiers – he would always try and talk to the enemy hoping that their humanity would shine through and the fighting averted –
- **When doing dua’** – Imam Ali (A.S.) would say, “I used watch him do dua. He would raise his hands like a needy person raising his hands begging for food. Tears would stream down his cheeks and one of the dua’s Imam quotes, ‘Allahumma hassin khalqi. Allahumma jannini munqaratil akhlaaq’ O Allah make my nature and character good. Keep me away from that akhlaaq which is bad
- **He emancipated women** – He taught that both genders were created for the same purpose – the recognition of their Creator and therefore the realisation of their full potential as human beings – but have been given different tools with which to fulfil their common goal. Indeed, their physiological, emotional, and psychological differences are a result of

their divergent spiritual mandate Man and woman represent two forms of divine energy, they are the male and female elements of a single soul. In secular societies even today if a woman marries, she changes her name. She has no essential existence - A name is significant - she does not possess sufficient value or credit to have a name. When his daughter used to enter the room he would stand for her in respect.....

- **They tried to bribe him** – intimidate him, threatened him with death and destruction – but he stood firm – not for a moment losing momentum in pursuing his mission to ensure that in recognising the unity of the one God the human being would realise his/her full potential physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually –
- **A teacher is recognised through his students** – Let’s see how Ali (p.b.u.h.) describes him – “In the past I had a brother in God – the insignificance of the world in his eyes made him great in my eyes. He was not ruled by his stomach – he used to keep silent most of the time – yet when he spoke he silenced all speakers and quenched the thirst of all questioners. He was more eager to listen than to speak. He was considered weak, yet in an emergency he was a lion of the forest. He would not advance an argument unless it was decisive, and he would not censure anyone for what could be excused until he had heard the excuse. He would say what he would do and not say what he would not do. When two things came to him, he would see which was more emotionally desirable and then do the contrary.....”

- **This personality preached a religion** – founded a state, built a nation, laid down a moral code, initiated numberless social and political reforms, established a dynamic and powerful society to practise and represent his teachings, revolutionalised the worlds of human thought and action for all time.

The human being is faced with hundreds of roads that are placed before him but there is only one siratul mustaqeem. This is the meaning of the hadith where one day Rasulullah (S.A.W.) was sitting with his companions when he took a twig and began to scratch some lines on the earth. One of the lines was straight whilst the others were twisted and crooked. He then pointed to the straight line and said “This is my path; all the others are not my path.”

This is also the reason why the Qur’an mentions darknesses (zhulumat) in the plural as opposed to light (nur) which is always in the singular. The paths of going astray are many and various. The path of truth is one.

It is here that the need for a guide (Prophets) becomes clear because without their guidance the human being is unable to discern the straight road which will lead to his full potential.

The Qur’an has another word for path which is sabeel which has a similar meaning to that of siraat or road. Yet in essence they are not quite the same as sabeel is used in the plural form as subul whereas siraat is always used in the singular. Thus the meaning of sabeel is the tributary path that ends at the main fundamental road which is the siraat.

We as human beings are like a caravan on the road to perfection. In order to arrive at ultimate perfection we must travel along the main road. Yet in coming to it each one of us

has his own particular starting point, and so approaches the path on a minor subsidiary path. E.g. we may have varied professions – doctor, labourer, trader and so on and each constitutes a path upon which the person approaches the main road.

AYA 7

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
الضَّالِّينَ

7. The path of those whom You have favoured; not those who earn Your anger nor of those who have gone astray.

The ayaat of the Qur'an describing stories of people who followed guidance; and of the people who didn't follow and the resulting punishment are elaborations of this aya.

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ is the way of those upon whom delight has been bestowed, not those upon whom anger burns, Na'ma is delight, happiness. There is no anger in this life. If you do not see mercy, then you have brought darkness upon yourself. Your ignorance is not the fault of someone else. If you do something inane and as a consequence harm comes to you, then Reality is angry with you, angry in the sense that you are not in unification with it. Anger implies a high degree of discontent on the part of one entity with another, which leads to severing of the relationship between the two.

There is only Allah. There is only Reality. Consequently, there is no place for superstition. It is you who decide whether Allah is angry with you. Rahma must encompass everything. Your loss is, in fact, within that rahma. The condition you are in is appropriate because you have brought it about by your heart. This is cosmos, not chaos. It is total ecology. As human beings, we are all occasionally at a loss and often unsure. It is for this reason that we have to keep healthy and correct companionship. Existentially, we need guidance.

To paraphrase this aya, we are saying:

O Allah! Show us the straight road, the road of the blessed and pure, who are continually receiving Your blessings; not the road of those who are remote from their own humanity and have earned Your anger; and not the path of those who are confused and who at every moment appear in a different guise attaching themselves to a dofferent group.

SUMMARY

Suratul Fatiha can be divided into three sections.

- i) The first section includes the opening line up to Maliki yowm ad Deen. It is an exposition of reality. You find yourself awakened suddenly and you say: I am in gratitude, praise to Allah, Who has these attributes. You are inspired after having been in wilderness and bewilderment, so you say, Al hamdu lillahi rabb al 'alamin, out of contentment and sanity.
- ii) In the next section, (from Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nastain to Ihdina as-Sirat al-Mustaqim), you are the adorer, the abd. This now is transaction and demand. It is a request, it is action. In this section the heart cries out.
- iii) The third part is like the echo of reality in order to confirm what you are saying and to answer your question.