

Unraveling More Secrets of al-Fatihah

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

“The Most Gracious, Most Merciful.”¹

Have you ever wondered why this comes before “*Maliki Yaumi-Deen*” [Master of the Day of Judgement] in al-Fatihah? Picture this scenario. You happened to be at the scene of a crime and there is an ongoing investigation. The trial begins and though you are innocent, the judge summons you for questioning.

He proceeds to question you in one of two manners: He at once bombards you with interrogation! [Why were you at the scene of the crime? What were you doing? At what time did you arrive? What did you see? etc.] When your heart nearly stops and your nerves can no longer stand it, the judge then reassures you, “by the way, we know you are innocent but we are collecting as much information as we can.”

Or, he declares to you from the beginning that “we know you are innocent, but we appreciate all the information you can help us with”, and then proceeds with his questions. You would be much more relaxed and comfortable in the second scenario, wouldn't you? So what does “ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem” have to do with “Maliki Yaumi-Deen” and why does it come before it? To remind us that it is “ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem” who will judge us on Judgment Day. These 2 names should kindle within us that sense of relief and reassurance in Salah when we are reminded of our stand before Allah on that terrifying day - Judgment Day. [Let us always strive to remain, worthy of this Mercy.]

“ar-Rahman ar-Raheem” declares that Allah's sovereignty is that of an all-encompassing Mercy [not Wrath]. In this life, He is there for everyone - believers and non-believers, the righteous and the wrongdoers. He feeds, clothes, heals, and provides, for all. He's not quick to punish but provides ample time for people to return to Him – a whole lifetime!

And Allah's Mercy is manifested either through His giving [of favours] or through His withholding of them. And when He sometimes withholds a fa-

¹ Transliterated: “*Ar-Rahmanir Raheem.*”

your from us, this in reality is the *heart of giving*, for we have been given of knowledge but so very little to immediately realize the wisdom. Again, it's a mercy in disguise!

“Does He Who created not know..?”² and Allah [swt] says “...But it may well be that you hate a thing the while it is good for you, and it may well be that you love a thing the while it is bad for you, and Allah knows, whereas you do not know.”³

When we say “ar-Rahmaan”: this form of “Merciful” is in the Arabic form that implies “*to the fullest extent*”, like ghadbaan vs. ghaadeb [angry] or joo'aan vs. jaa'e' [hungry]. The former form implies the fullest extent of hunger and anger in comparison to the latter form. Thus Allah is truly the Most Merciful, to the fullest extent of the word!

In fact, “ar-Rahmaan” is the most *all encompassing* of His names. Just remember by which name He chose to preside over His Throne: “*ar-Rahmaan, above the Throne presides!*”⁴ His most all-encompassing name is always coupled in the Quran, with his most all - encompassing creation - *His Throne!*

And this name only belongs to Him - You will never find anyone named “Ar-rahmaan”, except Allah, but instead people will name “Abdur-Rahmaan” [the servant of the Most Merciful]. You will also never find anyone with the name “*Allah*” besides Allah. These two names are His, exclusively! Now “ar-Raheem” is the One who *delivers* His mercy to His creation. You will see this name used in the Quran when Allah speaks of His mercy to believers, specifically. If we knew well the true nature of Allah and the true nature of people, we would prefer without an instant of hesitation to deal with Allah, over having to deal with people. It suffices us to know that Allah's Mercy for us far exceeds the mercy of our own mothers for us. So “*Alhamdulillah*” for the kind of sovereignty He reigns by. Feel the rhythm of *ar-Rahmaan ar-Raheem* lift the heaviness off your heart.

² Surah Mulk 67:14.

³ Surah al-Baqarah 2:216.

⁴ Surah Taha 20:5.

A Little Shake-Up

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

“Master of the Day of Recompense”⁵

Why does Allah choose the word “Maalik” [Master, Lord, sovereign]? This is because any authority or power that was granted to creation in this life will be neutralized completely then! All dominion and power will now belong to the real *King!* In fact, no one can even utter a word or intercede for anyone else until He permits it. There are two recitations for this word: *Maaliki* [from ownership] and *Maliki* [from the sovereignty of a king] Two meanings to demonstrate Allah’s sole and absolute control and authority on that dreaded day:

“On the Day you see it every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of God is severe.”⁶

يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ
كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ
بِسُكَارَىٰ وَلَكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ

“When man will flee from his own brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his spouse and his children.”⁷

يَوْمَ يَقْرَأُ الْمُرءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ

On that day, the heavens will be “rolled up like written scrolls!”⁸ in “His Right Hand”⁹ and the “trumpet will be sounded and all that are in the heavens and the earth will fall senseless...”¹⁰ Who is left? The angel of the trumpet. So Allah Almighty takes his soul. Who is left? No one. And Our Lord calls, “To

⁵ Transliterated: “*Maliki Yawmid deen.*”

⁶ Surah al-Hajj 22:2.

⁷ Surah Abasa 80:34-36.

⁸ Surah al-Anbiyah 21:104.

⁹ Surah az-Zumar 39:67.

¹⁰ Surah az-Zumar 39:68.

Whom does the dominion belong today?!” No answer. “To Whom does the dominion belong today?!” No answer. “To Whom does the dominion belong today?!” Dead silence. Allah finally answers Himself and declares, “To Allah, The One, The Overpowering!”¹¹

Then “a second [trumpet] is sounded, when, behold, they will stand and look on..”¹²And the “earth will shine bright with the light of its Lord!”¹³ Your “Lord stands, and His angels, rank upon rank! And Hell, on that day, is brought face to face..”¹⁴ And the sun draws near above the heads, on a day the length of which will be 50,000 years! How can we be saved from the horrors of that day? The answer, coming up next.

In the meantime, let’s call upon these real images with “*Maaliki Yaumi-Deen*”. As you recite it in your prayer, pause upon it for a while. These words should not fall upon deaf ears and closed hearts, for a true Muslim’s heart always oscillates between hope and fear. Hope for Allah’s mercy and fear of Allah’s displeasure and punishment.

¹¹ Surah al-Ghafir 40:16.

¹² Surah az-Zumar 39:68.

¹³ Surah az-Zumar 39:69.

¹⁴ Surah al-Fajr 89:22.

