



# The Prophet & The Qur'an

## #12: Surat al-Fatiha as a two-way conversation between God and Human

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# Jesus Christ explains Qur'anic terms! (Tafsir Tabari #147)

The Messenger of God said: Truly, Jesus, son of Mary, said:

*Al-Rahman is the All-Merciful of the Hereafter and of this world;*

*Al-Raheem is the Most Merciful of the Hereafter.*

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# Hadith Qudsi – Sahih Muslim #395

٣٨- (٣٩٥) وَحَدَّثَنَا إِسْحَاقُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْحَنْظَلِيُّ،  
أَخْبَرَنَا سُفْيَانُ بْنُ عُيَيْنَةَ، عَنِ الْعَلَاءِ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ : (مَنْ صَلَّى صَلَاةً  
لَمْ يَقْرَأْ فِيهَا بِأَمِّ الْقُرْآنِ فَهِيَ خَدَابٌ). ثَلَاثًا، غَيْرُ تَمَامٍ،  
فَقِيلَ لِأَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ: إِنَّا نَكُونُ وَرَاءَ الْإِمَامِ، فَقَالَ: أَقْرَأُ بِهَا  
فِي نَفْسِكَ، فَإِنِّي سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَقُولُ: (قَالَ اللَّهُ  
تَعَالَى: قَسَمْتُ الصَّلَاةَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي نِصْفَيْنِ،  
وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ. فَإِذَا قَالَ الْعَبْدُ: ﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ  
الْعَالَمِينَ﴾ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: حَمَدَنِي عَبْدِي، وَإِذَا قَالَ:  
﴿الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: أَثْنَى عَلَيَّ عَبْدِي.  
وَإِذَا قَالَ: ﴿مَالِكُ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ﴾ قَالَ مَجَّدَنِي عَبْدِي.  
(وَقَالَ مَرَّةً: فَوَضَّ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي) فَإِذَا قَالَ: ﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ

# Hadith Qudsi – Sahih Muslim #395

حديث  
(٣٩٥) ٤- كِتَابُ الصَّلَاةِ ١)

وَأَيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ» قَالَ : هَذَا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ عَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ . فَإِذَا قَالَ : ﴿اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ﴾ قَالَ : هَذَا لِعَبْدِي وَلِعَبْدِي مَا سَأَلَ .

قال سُفْيَانُ : حَدَّثَنِي بِهِ الْعَلَاءُ ابْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ ابْنِ يَعْقُوبَ ، دَخَلْتُ عَلَيْهِ وَهُوَ مَرِيضٌ فِي بَيْتِهِ ، فَسَأَلْتُهُ أَنَا عَنْهُ .

٣٩- (٣٩٥) حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ ، عَنْ مَالِكِ بْنِ أَنَسٍ ، عَنْ الْعَلَاءِ ابْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ ، أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ أَبَا السَّائِبِ ، مَوْلَى هِشَامِ بْنِ زُهَيْرَةَ ، يَقُولُ : سَمِعْتُ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ يَقُولُ : قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ .

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This hadith qudsi was transmitted by a man on his sick bed!

Sufyan [bin 'Uyaynah] said: al-'Ala' bin Ya'qub narrated this hadith to me when I entered upon him whilst he was sick at home, and I asked him about this hadith.

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# Hadith Qudsi – Sahih Muslim #395

## The Necessity of al-Faatihah, and its Excellence

He would vehemently emphasise the importance of this soorah, saying: "There is no prayer for the one who did not recite [in it] the opening chapter [at least]"<sup>1</sup>, and in another saying: *That prayer is not sufficient in which a man does not recite the Opening of the Book*<sup>2</sup>. He also said: *He who performs a prayer in which he does not recite the Opening of the Book, then it (i.e. the prayer) is deficient, it is deficient, it is deficient, incomplete*.<sup>3</sup> He also said:

Allaah the Blessed and Exalted has said: "I have divided the prayer<sup>4</sup> between Myself and My servant, into two halves: half of it is for Me and half is for My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for." Then the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) said: *Recite! The servant says "Praise be to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds"; Allaah the Exalted says "My servant has praised Me". The servant says, "The Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy"; Allaah says, "My servant has extolled Me". The servant says "Master of the Day of Judgment"; Allaah the Exalted says, "My servant has glorified Me". The servant says, "It is You (alone) we worship and it is You (alone) we ask for help"; [He says:], "This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for". The servant says, "Guide us to the Straight Path, the Path of those whom You have favoured, not of those who receive Your anger, nor of those who go astray". [He says:], "All these are for My servant, and My servant shall have what he has asked for."*<sup>5</sup>

He also used to say: *Allaah did not reveal in the Torah or the Gospel anything like the Mother of the Qur'aan. It is the Seven Oft-Repeated*<sup>6</sup> *[and the Grand Recitation which have been bestowed upon me].*<sup>7</sup>



# The Prophet's PRAYER

sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam  
described

from the beginning to the end  
as though you see it

صِفَاتُ  
صَلَاةِ النَّبِيِّ  
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

مِنَ الْمُكْبِيرِ إِلَى النَّسِيمِ كَأَنكَ تَرَاهَا

by:

Shaikh Muhammad Naasir-ud-Deen Al-Albaani

Recitation which have been bestowed upon me].<sup>7</sup>

He (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) commanded "the one who prayed badly" to recite it in his prayer<sup>8</sup>, but said to one who could not remember it, Say:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

(I declare Allaah free from all defects; all Praise be to Allaah; none has the right to be worshipped but Allaah; Allaah is the Greatest; there is no might or power except by Allaah)<sup>1</sup>.

He also said to "the one who prayed badly": If you know some of the Qur'aan, then recite it, otherwise praise Allaah, declare His Greatness and declare that none has the right to be worshipped but Allaah; <sup>2</sup>

### The Abrogation of Recitation behind the Imaam in the Loud Prayers

He had given permission for those being led by the Imaam to recite Soorah al-Faatihah in the loud prayers, when once:

"he was praying Fajr and the recitation became difficult for him. When he finished, he said: Perhaps you recite behind your imaam. We said: "Yes, quickly<sup>3</sup>, O Messenger of Allaah." He said: Do not do so, except for [each of you reciting] the opening chapter of the Book, for the prayer is not valid of the one who does not recite it.<sup>4</sup>

Later, he forbade them from reciting in the loud prayers at all, when:

"He finished a prayer in which he was reciting loudly (in one narration: it was the dawn prayer) and said: Were any of you reciting with me just now?! A man said: "Yes, I was, O Messenger of Allaah". He said: I say, why am I contended with? [Abu Hurairah said:] So the people stopped reciting with the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) when he was



has an imaam, then the recitation of the imaam is recitation for him<sup>1</sup> - this applying in the loud prayers.

## The Obligation to Recite in the Quiet Prayers

As for the quiet prayers, he urged them to recite during them; Jaabir said, "We used to recite behind the imaam in Zuhr and 'Asr: soorah al-Faatihah and another soorah in the first two rak'ahs, and soorah al-Fatihah in the last two."<sup>2</sup>

However, he dissuaded them from confusing him with their recitation, when:

"he prayed Zuhr with his Companions and said (afterwards): *Which of you recited "Glorify the name of your Lord the Most High" (soorah al-A'laa, 87) ?* Someone said: It was I [but I was only intending nothing but good by doing so]. So he said: *I knew that someone was contending with me by it.*<sup>3</sup> In another hadeeth: "They used to recite behind the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam) [loudly], so he said: *You have mixed up my (recitation of the) Qur'aan.*"<sup>4</sup>

He also said: *Truly, the person praying is privately consulting his Lord, so he should be careful about what he consults him with, and you should not recite the Qur'aan loudly over each other.*<sup>5</sup>

# Do we recite Fatiha behind the imam?

- **Never** – Hanafi (complete silence)
- **Yes, always** – Shafi'i & many Hadith scholars
- **Only in quiet prayers/rak'ats, not in loud ones**
  - Initial Shafi'i
  - Shaybani (student of Abu Hanifa – endorsed by Mulla Ali al-Qari and other Hanafis, eg Lucknowi)
  - Zuhri, Malik, Ibn al-Mubarak, Ahmad bin Hanbal
  - Ibn Taymiyyah, Albani

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# Do we recite Fatiha behind the imam?

- The Sahaba (Companions of the Prophet) disagreed – the Imams reflected this diversity
  - Hadiths on the subject appear contradictory
  - Fanaticism leads to disputes & even *takfir*
  - E.g. the fabricated hadith: “Whoever recites behind the imam, his mouth is filled with fire.”
  - Many madhhabī brothers and sisters do not know their own Madhhab, or the diverse range of intra-Madhhab views
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## *Maliki or Maaliki Yawm-id-Deen ?*

- The hadith qudsi mentions: When the servant says *maliki* or *maaliki yawm-id-deen*, God says, “My servant has declared My Majesty” (*majjadani ‘abdi*)
  - This fits better with the reading *maliki yawm-id-deen* (*King of the Day of Judgment*) rather than *maaliki yawm-id-deen* (*Owner of the Day of Judgment*)
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## *Maliki or Maaliki Yawm-id-Deen ?*

- Most of the classical Qur'an reciters: *maliki* (King); a minority: *maaliki* (Owner)
- Tabari: *maliki* is better because it includes the meaning of *maaliki* but not vice-versa, because every King is an Owner/Possessor but not every Owner/Possessor is a King
- *Maliki* (King) also resonates with *maliki-n-nas* & fits the hadith qudsi better: "My servant has declared My Majesty"

# The hadith qudsi implies that the *basmalah* is not part of Surat al-Fatiha

- The first three verses belong to God:
    - Human praising God
  - The middle verse is the meeting point:
    - “You alone we worship ...”
  - The last three verses: “These belong to My Servant, and My Servant shall have what he asks for.”
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- NB: Symmetry of the seven verses of Fatiha

# How does God respond to the Fatiha?

- Through answers that we are seeking, that come to us in prayer
- especially prayers done alone in the depths of the night
- Caliph Omar: “I plan my military manoeuvres whilst in prayer (*salat*).”
- LinkedIn professional advice:  
meditate/focus/concentrate to find answers



# The Prophet & The Qur'an

#13:

Who are those who received anger  
and those who stray?



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Who are those “on whom You bestowed your favour” ?

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ  
وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا

*Whoever obeys God and the Messenger: they will be with those upon whom God bestowed favour: Prophets, Truthful Ones, Martyr-Witnesses and the Righteous. What a beautiful fellowship!*

Women, 4:69

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# Who are “those who received anger” and “those who stray” ? (Q 1:7)

- Traditionally: the Jews and the Christians respectively
- The Prophet’s City, Madinah, had Abrahamic dialogue, reflected in the Madinan Chapters
- How do we understand this in today’s multifaith context including interfaith, Abrahamic dialogue?

# Islam as the Middle Way between Judaism & Christianity

JUDAISM	ISLAM	CHRISTIANITY
Jesus is not the Messiah, Christ	Jesus is the Word of God, Spirit of God & Messiah / Christ	Jesus Christ is both God and the Son of God
LETTER OF THE LAW (SABBATH FISHING VILLAGE)	LETTER & SPIRIT OF THE (ETHICAL) LAW	SPIRIT OF THE LAW
ERRING WITH OUTWARD KNOWLEDGE	BALANCING INNER & OUTER KNOWLEDGE WITH ACTION	ERRING WITHOUT OUTWARD KNOWLEDGE
“People of the Book: Do Not Go To Extremes in Your Religion”	<i>Women, 4:171</i> <i>The Last Supper, 5:77</i>	“People of the Book: Do Not Go To Extremes in Your Religion”
EXOTERISM (OUTER, LEGALISTIC)	BALANCING EXOTERISM & ESOTERISM	ESOTERISM (INNER, MYSTICAL)

“The Sunnah within Islam is like Islam amongst the religions.”

- This implies that Islam has “Jewish” (exoteric, Wahhabi-Salafi) and “Christian” (esoteric, Sufi) tendencies
- “When learned people stray, they are like Jews. When worshippers stray, they are like Christians.”
- Former Chief Rabbi of Ireland, David Rosen, described himself as a “Jewish Wahhabi”, cf. Jewish/Muslim responses to the Trinity
- Asin Palacios called Sufism, “Christianised Islam” (*el islam cristianizado*)