

﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

*All praise is due to Allah alone, the Sustainer of All the Worlds.*

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Allah is the owner of everything that exists, the controller and sustainer of the entire universe, and the possessor of all the treasures of the worlds. His dominion reigns over everything other than Him. In return, human beings continue to show ingratitude to Him by not recognizing His oneness and supremacy and committing the crime of shirk- associating partners to Him in various ways. It should be noted that never has any proof, rational or revelational, been provided for shirk from the beginning of time, and it will stay so until the end of time.

The word *Rabb* is related to the word *tarbiyah*, which refers to training or cultivation towards certain aims or ends. Rabb refers to the one who cultivates, sustains, nurtures and owns. Allah created the human being, and then provided all the ways and means for him to grow and nurture. So He is the creator of life as well the one who continually sustains life. Recognizing this reality about Allah necessitates His worship as gratitude.

There were a people who used to claim that they were the chosen people of Allah and claimed exclusive rights to Paradise and salvation.

﴿وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصْرَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّهُ رَبُّ﴾

*The Jews and Christians claim, 'We are the children of Allah and his beloved ones.'*<sup>20</sup>

﴿وَقَالُوا لَن يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرَىٰ﴾

*None shall enter Paradise unless they be Jew or Christian.*<sup>21</sup>

Allah reminds us that He is not the Rabb of the Jews and Christians or any other people for that matter, but the Master and Sustainer of all people- nay, all worlds. Faith is recognizing Him and giving Him what is due to Him.

Allah mentions that He is the Lord of the *worlds*, using the plural. How many worlds exist only Allah knows. We know of the worlds of humans, the jinn, the animals, the angels and many more. But there may very well be worlds we are not aware of. Narrations mention various numbers including 40,000 and 80,000. But many scholars maintain that it is an unquantifiably large number. Allah himself says, "And He has created that of which you have no knowledge."<sup>22</sup>

﴿وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

<sup>20</sup> The Noble Qur'an. al-Mā'idah 5:18.

<sup>21</sup> The Noble Qur'an. al-BAqarah 2:111.

<sup>22</sup> The Noble Qur'an. al-Nahl 16:8

The point is that there are many worlds, which also points to the possibility of other life forms and universes. If other planets we have discovered have no water or environments to sustain human life, who knows if there are other types of creation that are sustained by other means unlike ours?

Just as Allah is the Lord of all worlds, the Prophet Muhammad, unlike previous Prophets, is designated a mercy to all the worlds as well. Therefore, if someone claims that there are many paths to God, all correct, know that this is falsehood. The only way to Allah is through belief in the Prophet Muhammad. He is the only route of guidance.

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

The Beneficent, the Merciful.

﴿

These are Allah's most fundamental attributes. They relate to His endless mercy and compassion. They are perpetual and over-riding. In contrast, His attributes relating to anger and punishment are applied only in specific circumstances and are not general, fundamental attributes.

These are the very first attributes that Allah calls our attention to in His Noble Book. They are the attributes that are part of the basmalah, which is supposed to be the starting point of every chapter of the Qur'an, every recitation and every deed we perform. Allah wants us to fear His displeasure, His majesty and His Loftiness, and not necessarily His punishment. For our relationship with Allah must be one of love based upon His mercy.

It is for this reason that Allah describes the state of the pious ones in the Hereafter, in a moving passage, with the description- "those who fear al-Rahmān."

﴿مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ﴾

*Those who fear the Merciful One in secret, and come to Allah with submissive hearts.<sup>23</sup>*

In another beautiful passage, the opening verses of an entire surah entitled *al-Rahmān*, Allah says:

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ ۙ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ۖ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۖ﴾

*The Merciful One, who has taught the Qur'an, created man and taught him speech.<sup>24</sup>*

From these verses, we see that the greatest expression of mercy of the Possessor of Mercy (al-Rahmān) is His teaching us the Qur'an, followed by the faculty of speech, because it allows us to recite the Qur'an. In addition, the multiplicity of languages throughout the world is a great sign of Allah.

Al-Rahmān refers to the abundance of mercy and applies to all in the world, believers and disbelievers alike. This is generally confined to this world for the disbelievers and ends in the Hereafter for them. The attribute of

<sup>23</sup> The Noble Qur'an. al-Qāf 50:33.

<sup>24</sup> The Noble Qur'an. al-Rahmān 55:1-4.

al-Raheem, on the other hand, refers to the special, continuing mercy for the believers and extends to the eternity of the hereafter.

﴿ قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ ۖ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

*Say: Who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah, which He hath produced for His servants, and the things, clean and pure, (which He hath provided) for sustenance? Say: They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) purely for them on the Day of Judgment. Thus do We explain the Signs in detail for those who understand.*<sup>25</sup>

The logical necessitate of understanding the reality of Allah's attribute of al-Raheem is to love Allah and worship Him and get closer to Him.

﴿ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴾

*The Master of the Day of Judgement.*

Allah then reminds us that He is the owner of the day when He will question us about the blessings He gave us, which is the day of judgement and justice and accounts. Ownership is being ascribed to that Day, though Allah is owner of all, to emphasize the concept of accountability.

﴿ يَوْمَ لَا تَمْلِكُ نَفْسٌ لِنَفْسٍ شَيْئًا ۖ وَالْأَمْرُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ﴾

*The day no one will own anything over any other.*<sup>26</sup>

That will be the day that absolutely no other ownership or sovereignty will be expressed save that of Allah. Today, we may be owners and rulers and soverigns, though in a limited sense, but on that day, all will be reduced to utter dependency.

﴿ يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ ۗ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴾

*The Day whereon they will all come forth: not a single thing concerning them is hidden from Allah.*

Allah will call out:

*Whose will be the dominion that Day?*

And Allah will answer:

*That of Allah, the One the Irresistible*<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The Noble Qur'an, al-A'raf 7:32.

<sup>26</sup> The Noble Qur'an, al-Infitar 82:19.

<sup>27</sup> The Noble Qur'an, al-Ghafir 40:16.

That will be the day of Justice, the day that belongs to the supreme sovereign, Allah Himself. Justice demands that oppressors are punished and the oppressed are avenged. This is a day all oppressors should fear, and a day all the wronged look forward to.

In short, understanding the reality of the attributes of al-Rahmān and al-Raheem necessitate the love of Allah, while grasping the reality of His being the Owner of the Day of Accounts necessitates His fear (khawf).

**DRAFT**