

Meaning of bismillaah ir rahmaan ir raheem

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[Based on the works of Imaam Aboo Ja'far at Tahaawee's (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) Al 'Aqeedah at Tahaaweeyyah & the scholar Aboo Muhammad ibn Qudaamah's (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) Lum'ah ul I'tiqaad]

QUESTION: What is the meaning of bismillaah ir rahmaan ir raheem, a phrase which Muslims use commonly when starting speeches, books and other affairs?

ANSWER: This phrase literally means, "In the Name of Allaah, ar Rahmaan, ar Raheem."

Allaah – this is derived from the word al ilaah which means the Being which is worshipped.

This word ilaah occurs in the phrase laa ilaah ill Allaah - there is no ilaah (deity worthy of worship) except Allaah.

The Name Allaah is a Name which no one else from the creation can give themselves.

ar Rahmaan – this is one of the Names of Allaah which He has given Himself and carries the meaning of One who is Most Merciful.

Allaah has many many Names, some of which He has informed us of – and some of which He has kept to Himself.

From those Names which He has told us of is also ar Raheem – the One who bestows Mercy. So Allaah is vast in His Mercy and the person who reflects on the abundance of beneficial things which Allaah has given us in this life will realise this.

The phrase bismillaah ir rahmaan ir raheem occurs at the beginning of all the Soorahs (chapters) of the Qur'aan except one (Soorah 9).

It also occurs as a statement of one of the earlier Prophets, Sulaymaan (Solomon) when he wrote a letter to Bilqe'es, and she commented:

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She said: O chiefs! There has been delivered to me a noble letter.

It is from Sulaymaan and it reads:

Bismillaah ir rahmaan ir raheem.

[Soorah an Naml (the 27th chapter) verses 29 to 31]

And when a Muslim starts something with the phrase bismillaah ir rahmaan ir raheem (“In the Name of Allaah, ar Rahmaan, ar Raheem.”) then what he/she intends by saying this is:

In the name of Allaah, I seek aid and in the name of Allaah, I seek blessing.

Therefore this phrase is a tremendous way to begin one’s speech and books and letters.