

Surah 17. Al-Israa

Asad: Say: "Invoke God, or invoke the Most Gracious: by whichever name you invoke Him, [He is always the One - for] His are all the attributes of perfection."¹³² And [pray unto Him; yet] be not too loud in thy prayer nor speak it in too low a voice, but follow a way in-between;

Malik: O Prophet, say to them: "Whether you call Him Allah or call Him Rahman; it is all the same by whichever name you call Him because for Him are all the Finest names. Offer your Salah neither in too loud a voice nor in too low a voice but seek a middle course

Pickthall: Say (unto mankind): Cry unto Allah, or cry unto the Beneficent, unto whichsoever ye cry (it is the same). His are the most beautiful names. And thou (Muhammad), be not loud voiced in thy worship nor yet silent therein, but follow a way between.

Yusuf Ali: Say: "Call upon Allah or call upon Rahman: by whatever name ye call upon Him (it is well): for to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names. Neither speak thy Prayer aloud nor speak it in a low tone but seek a middle course between." ^{2321 2322 2323}

Transliteration: Quli odAAoo Allaha awi odAAoo alRrahmana ayyan ma tadAAoo falahu alasmao alhusna wala tajhar bisalatika wala tukhafit biha waibtaghi bayna thalika sabeelan

Khattab:

Say, O Prophet, "Call upon Allah or call upon the Most Compassionate—whichever you call, He has the Most Beautiful Names." Do not recite your prayers too loudly or silently, but seek a way between.

Author Comments

132 - For an explanation of the expression al-asma' al-husna (lit., "the most perfect [or "most goodly"] names"), see surah {7}, note [145]. The epithet ar-rahman - rendered by me throughout as "the Most Gracious"- has an intensive significance, denoting the unconditional, all-embracing quality and exercise of grace and mercy, and is applied exclusively to God, "who has willed upon Himself the law of grace and mercy" ({6 :12} and {54}).

2321 - Cf. vii. 180. Rahman describes one of the attributes of Allah,-His grace and Mercy which come to the sinner even before he feels conscious of the need of it,-the preventive Grace which saves Allah's servants from sin. See n. 19 to i. 1. Allah can be invoked, either by His simple name, which includes all attributes, or by one of the names implying the attributes by which we try to explain His nature to our limited understanding. The attribute of Mercy in Rahman was particularly repugnant to the Pagan Arabs (see xxv. 60, and xxi. 36): that is why special stress is laid on it in the Qur-an.

2322 - These Beautiful Names of Allah are many. The hadith related by Tirmizi, accepted by some as authentic, mentions 99 names of Allah. Qadhi Muhammad Sulaiman has published an Urdu monograph on the subject, published by the Daftar Rahmatun-lil- 'Alamin Patiala, 1930. Those who wish to see a poetic Commentary on the names in the form of stories in English may consult Sir Edwin Arnold's Pearls of the Faith. Sir Edwin's stories are of unequal merit, but a fine example is furnished by No. 4, al-Malik. "The King".

2323 - Cf. vii. 205. All prayer should be pronounced with earnestness and humility, whether it is congregational prayer or the private outpouring of one's own soul. Such an attitude is not consistent with an over-loud pronunciation of the words, though in public prayers the standard of permissible loudness is naturally higher than in the case of private prayer. In public prayers, of course, the Azan or call to prayer will be in a loud voice to be heard near and far, but the chants from the Sacred Book should be neither so loud as to attract the hostile notice of those who do not believe nor so low in tone as not to be heard by the whole congregation.

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