

WITH THE SHAYKH



Commencing Meetings with the *Fātiḥah*

Shaykh ‘Abd Allah Bin Bayyah¹

It is recommended to recite al-Fātiḥah unrestrictedly; meaning, without confining it to a specific place or occasion. Allah, Transcendent and Exalted is He, says: *Recite from the Qur’an as much as is easy for you.*² And in the very same verse: *So recite from it as much as is easy.* Hence reciting the Qur’an entails a tremendous reward. Allah, Transcendent is He, will grant to you in return ten good deeds for each letter [of the Qur’an] you recite. I do not say that *Alif. Lām. Mīm.* is a letter. Rather, *Alif* is a letter; *Lām* is a letter; and *Mīm* is a letter. Its like was said by the Prophet, peace be upon him, as reported by al-Tirmidhī, no.2910; by way of Ibn Mas‘ūd, may Allah be pleased with him.

Al-Tirmidhī also records, no.2926; by way of Abu Sa‘id al-Khudrī, may Allah be pleased with him; the hadith: “Whoever, because of being preoccupied with the Qur’an or with remembrance of Me, asks not of Me, I shall grant him the best of what I give to those who ask [of Me].” This is because [reciting] the Qur’an is one of the most meritorious and highly recommended of deeds.

As for doing so at the start of any gathering, or at its conclusion, then there is no explicit text related about this. If someone does so believing that it is a Sunnah, or an obligation, then this contravenes the Sacred Law. But if he recites it in order to seek blessings (*tabarruk*) with the Noble Qur’an, then, Allah willing, there is nothing wrong with this according to the view we hold to be the soundest. The issue entails a dispute related to what is called *bid‘ab idāfiyyah* - “innovation by way of extension”.³ Many Mālikī scholars detest this type of *bid‘ab*, whereas in the opinion of other scholars the issue goes back to the nature of *al-dalīl al-‘amm* - general proofs, and what their scope encompasses of [unrestricted] allowance or recommendation. This latter rule is the view of the Shafi‘is and al-‘Izz b. ‘Abd al-Salām, as well as of al-Qarāfī who was a Mālikī.

Therefore the issue, Allah willing, is one in which there is no problem, in the sense that it should not be a cause for schisms to arise between Muslims: “Do not hate one another, do not envy one another, do not turn your backs on one another,” says one hadith recorded by al-Bukhārī, no.6065 and Muslim, no.2599; by way of Anas, may Allah be pleased with him.

Thus, whoever wishes to recite [al-Fātiḥah at the start or end of a meeting], we should not prevent them from doing so. However, one should not think that this is a Sunnah, or that the Prophet, upon whom be peace, began in such a manner. This would not be correct. Nevertheless, if someone were to recite it for its blessings, or out of seeking the reward it has with Allah, then there is nothing wrong in doing so; Allah willing.



ENDNOTES

1. From www.binbayyah.net (trans. Surkheel Abu Aaliyah).
2. Qur'an 73:20.
3. *Bid'ab Iḍāfiyyah*: an innovation which has a basis in the Sacred Law, in general, but it has no explicit proof with regards its specific form. This is why it is called *iḍāfiyyah* - "extension; something added on". Thus, from one angle the act is connected back to a *sharī'ah* proof, and is not a *bid'ab* or innovation; while from another angle it is a *bid'ab* because of the form of the act not having any specific proof in the *sharī'ah*. This is in contrast to what is referred to by some as *bid'ab baqīḡiyyah*: an innovation which does not have even a general basis to legitimize it; neither in the Qur'an, the Sunnah, scholarly consensus (*ijmā'*), or analogical inference (*qiyāḡ*). Cf. al-Shāṡībī, *al-Iṡṡām* (Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn 'Affān, 1995), 1:367.