

WHERE EVERY PERFORMANCE IS COMMENCED WITH

BISMILLAH-IR-RAHMANI-RAHIM

In the post revolution Iran today, one of the eye-catching changes noticeable is the frequent use and recitation of Bismillah whenever any performance is initiated- be it in the official circle or otherwise. Should you happen to board an Iranian Airliner, you will hear the hostess or the pilot of the plane initiating with Bismillah before making any announcement. Listen to the radio or watch a TV program in Iran and the beginning of every performance is Bismillah. Attend a debate, seminar, interview or any meeting and you will notice speakers reciting Bismillah before commencing with any discussion. Notices or letters from official quarters or even from private friends start with Bismihi Ta'ala.

What does this change signify and what is the philosophy behind the constant use of this holy formula ?

The fact is that having opted to Islam by massive referendum as their sole ideology and as the primary basis of their constitution, government administration and way of life, the people now wish to assert their conviction and true faith. Perhaps they wish to proclaim their full reliance on Allah for help and no more depend<sup>ence</sup> upon any superpower also rejecting belief in supremacy of a Shah or king. In initiating with Bismillah, they wish to ensure that they accomplish every job in the country in true Islamic spirit- free of hypocrisy or corruption.

The holy formula of Bismillah has deep meaning. It is customary in this world that a new organization or undertaking is linked or patronized with the name of an exalted personality in the country. This enhances its popularity and gives lustre to its name. But for a new venture to achieve a lasting and good success, it is essential to attach <sup>to</sup> it and perform its opening in the name of one who is truly high and whose existence is eternal. All materialistic existences around us are but transient and subject to extinction one day. If there is any being which is eternal, it is the existence of Almighty Allah. Therefore to initiate and link any new performance or commence with any new project with the holy name of Allah is to invoke His blessing and help for achievement of lasting success.

Had it not been for the fact that they had constantly remained attached to Allah and their lives sacrificed on His path, the Prophets and their rightful vicegerents would not have been remembered with blessings and reverence for so long till this date. The holy Qura'n and Islamic history would not have preserved their names with so much ~~admiration~~ admiration.

The holy Qura'n quotes instances where the name of Allah was taken by recitation of Bismillah. On embarking upon the propagation of Islam, Prophet Muhammad s.a. is commanded to commence with the name of Allah:

"READ IN THE NAME OF YOUR LORD" (Sura Alaq- v.1)

In that amazing flood of water when boarding the ark in face of strong and high waves, Prophet Nuh a.s. advises his companions to recite the name of Allah and the holy Qura'n relates this in these words:

"AND HE (NUH) SAID: EMBARK IN IT, <sup>IN</sup> THE NAME OF ALLAH, BE ITS SAILING OR ITS ANCHORING" (Sura Hud v.41)

It would be observed that Prophet Nuh and his companions by the grace of Allah succeeded in by-passing the extreme dangers of drowning and <sup>finally</sup> disembarking to safety.

Also in the case of Prophet Sulaiman a.s. in his note to the Queen of Sheba began with Bismillah:

"SURELY IT IS FROM SULAIMAN AND SURELY IT IS IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE BENEFICIENT THE MERCIFUL" (Sura Naml v.30)

For the same reason, every Sura in the holy Qura'n is commenced with the recitation of Bismillah. It is commenced in the name of Allah so that the aim of the holy book which is guidance to all people is blessed and successfully achieved. The only Sura which has no Bismillah is Sura Tauba and this is because it is in the form of a declaration of war against breakers of covenants and criminals of Mecca. As such it does not befit to commence with the attributes of beneficence and mercifulness of Allah as contained in Bismillah.

Bismillah is recited at commencement of any project in order to invoke God's help for a lasting success. The holy Prophet is related to have said:

"EVERY IMPORTANT ACTION THAT IS NOT COMMENCED WITH THE NAME OF ALLAH ~~WILL BE CUT OFF (BECOME UNSTABLE & NON-SUCCESSFUL)~~ ~~CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE A LASTING SUCCESS"~~

feel

Man tends to <sup>feel</sup> be over confident of success in his life works by virtue of his personal strength or prowess. He tends to forget that it is Almighty Allah who is in real control of our destiny and in whose hands lies our ultimate success in life. Bismillah therefore is meant to eradicate this misconception and to remind man of the supreme control of Allah over <sup>his</sup> ~~our~~ daily affairs. Recitation of Bismillah is an emphasized act of virtue for invoking the help of One who is truly a Supreme Lord and Creator of all that ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> in this universe.