

Chapter “4”

Isti`adhah, Basmalah & Options of recitation

First: Isti`adhah

- Definition:

- **Linguistically:** it means seeking refuge and shelter.
- **Conventionally:** it is a phrase by means of which one seeks refuge and shelter with Allah against the accursed Satan.

- Rule:

- It is not written in the Qur'an
- Scholars opinions, is it mandatory or recommended?
- The majority of the scholars of recitation and the great reciters are of the opinion that it is **preferable/recommended** to recite it at the beginning of recitation. They built their opinion upon interpreting Allah's (Exalted be He) Saying: "[Prophet], when you recite the Qur'an, seek God's protection from the outcast, Satan." (Al-Nahl 16:98) to mean it is preferable to do so, however if a reciter does not utter it, he is not sinful.
- Another group of the scholars have the opinion that it is **obligatory** to mention it at the beginning of recitation, where they interpreted the abovementioned verse to mean obligation.

- Formula:

- All the reciters of the Qur'an choose the following form: "I seek refuge with Allah against the outcast Satan" (أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم) since this formula is nearly identical to the abovementioned noble verse.
- It is also acceptable to use other formulae in seeking refuge, provided it has been stated either in the Qur'an or the Sunnah

A- "I seek refuge by Allah against Satan" (أعوذ بالله من الشيطان)

B- "I seek refuge with Allah, the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing, against the outcast Satan" (أعوذ بالله السميع العليم من الشيطان الرجيم)

- Conditions:

There are two ways of saying the Isti`adha at the beginning of recitation, namely pronouncing it out loud or quietly.

A. It is recommended to say it out loud in two cases:

1. The reciter is reciting the Qur'an out loud with others who are listening to his recitation;
2. The reciter is one among a group of reciters and he is the one who starts the recitation.

Wisdom of saying it loudly: so that the listener may be quiet and pay attention to the Qur'an without any distractions.

B. It is recommended to recite it quietly in four cases:

1. If the reciter is reciting quietly;
2. If the reciter is reciting out loud but no one is listening to his recitation;
3. If the Qur'an is being recited during prayer, whether one is the imam leading the prayer, being led by the imam, or performing the prayer by oneself, particularly in the prayer performed out loud;
4. If one is reciting with other reciters but he is not the one who starts the recitation.

Wisdom of saying it quietly: In order to differentiate between the recitation of the Qur'an and the reading of any other sentences.

- Repeating the Isti'adhah

- No need to repeat:** If one stops the recitation due to any excuse, such as sneezing, clearing one's throat, or to comment on the recitation.
- Repeat:** if one stops the recitation for any other reason & then resumes it, he should start with a new *Isti'adhah*.

Second: The Basmalah

- Definition: The infinitive of the verb "*basmala*" i.e. to say بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ (In the Name of Allah, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.)

- Rule:

- o Scholars agree that the *Basmalah* is **part of a verse** in Surat An-Naml.
- o Also there is a unanimous agreement among the scholars of *Tajweed* that the *Basmalah* **should be recited at the beginning of Surat Al-Fatihah** (the Opening Chapter of the Qur'an).
- o There is also a consensus among the seven scholars of Qira'at that the *Basmalah* **should be recited at the beginning of every Surah of the Qur'an, except Surat Al-Tawbah**. This is because:
 - A- This is due to the fact that the *Basmalah* is so written in the Mushaf at the beginning of the surah
 - B- Also due to the authentic Hadith that Allah's Messenger (pbuh) would only know that a Surah of the Qur'an ended when the Basmalah was revealed to him. (Reported by Abu Al-Hakim who said that it is a *Sahih* (authentic) Hadith according to the conditions set by the two Imams; Al-Bukhari and Muslim).
- o As **for Surat Bara'ah (At-Tawbah)**, there is a consensus among scholars that *Basmalah* **should not be recited at the beginning of this Surah**. This is because:
 - A- This is because Surah Bara'ah was revealed including the verse of the sword, verse 29

B- It urges the believers to fight the disbelievers, kill them, take them as captives, besiege them, and to never enter a treaty with them, and it also warns the disbelievers of the punishment in this world and in the Hereafter.

C- This has been reported from `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said: "I asked `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) why the Basmalah was not mentioned at the beginning of Surat Bara'ah, whereupon he replied: 'This is because mentioning the *Basmalah* grants security, whereas this Surah was sent down with the command to fight the disbelievers.'"

- **In the middle of a surah, the reciter has the choice of saying the basmalah or not.**

Third: The Beginning of The Surah

- **Beginning with any Surah Except Al-Tawbah**

The reciter should begin recitation with three phrases: **A-Isti`adhah, B-Basmalah, C-First verse of the Surah.** In this case there are four options:

- 1- **Separating the three:** By first starting with the *Isti`adhah* then pausing for a while, and then reciting the *Basmalah* and again pausing for a while, and finally reciting the first verse of the Surah. This is the most preferable option.
- 2- **Saying the *Isti`adhah* separately** from the Basmalah and the first verse of the Surah: By first starting with the *Isti`adhah* and then pausing for a while, then reciting the Basmalah followed by the first verse of the Surah, without pausing between the two. It is next to the first option with regard to preference.
- 3- **Saying the *Isti`adhah* and the Basmalah together,** and then saying the first verse of the Surah separately: By first starting with the *Isti`adhah*, and then reciting the *Basmalah* without pausing between them. Then, pausing for a while before reciting the first verse of the Surah. It is the next most preferable option.
- 4- **Reciting them all without pausing:** By first starting with the *Isti`adhah*, followed by the *Basmalah* and reciting the first verse of the Surah, without pausing between any of them.

- **Beginning with Surat Al-Tawbah**

If the reciter should begin with two phrases: **A-Isti`adhah, B-First verse of the Surah.** In this case there are two options:

- 1- **Separating the *Isti`adhah* from the beginning of the surah with a pause,** without reciting the *Basmalah*.
- 2- **Connecting the *Isti`adhah*,** immediately to the beginning of the verse **without pausing** or reciting the *Basmalah*.

Forth: Starting in The Middle of The Surah

○ Starting in the middle of any Surah Except Surat Al-Tawbah

If the reciter begins with a verse in the middle of a surah, other than surat Al-Tawba, then there are two options:

First: Reciting the basmalah (with or without the isti'adha) where one has the choice of any of the four options mentioned above.

Second: Leave out the basmalah, where one has to choose one of the following two options:

- 1- **Separating the *Isti`adhah*** from the beginning of the verse with a pause.
- 2- **Connecting the *Isti`adhah*** immediately to the beginning of the verse **without pausing**. (*If the verse one intends to start with begins with one of Allah's Supreme Names, it is befitting not to recite them directly one after another, as this is improper and difficult to hear).

○ Starting in the middle of Surat Al-Tawbah

If the reciter begins with an ayah from the middle of surat Al-Tawbah, then the scholars have two different opinions:

- First opinion: **Prohibiting reciting the *Basmalah* in the middle of the surah**, in which case there are two options:

- 1- **Separating the *Isti`adhah* with a pause** then recite the verse.
- 2- **Connecting the *Isti`adhah* immediately** to the verse started with.

- Second opinion: **It is permissible to recite the Basmalah when starting in the middle of the surah**, in which case all the earlier four options are permissible.

Fifth: Joining Recitation of Two Consecutive Surahs

○ Joining recitation of any two consecutive Surah Except Surat Al-Tawbah

The reciter should recite the following three phrases: **A- End of first surah, B- The Basmalah, C- Start of second surah**. There are three options for this:

- 1- **Saying all of them separately** by pausing for a while after finishing the first Surah, and then reciting the Basmalah and pausing again before resuming the recitation of the following Surah.
 - 2- **Pausing after the end of the Surah** and then saying the Basmalah together with the beginning of the next Surah, without taking any pause between them.
 - 3- **Joining them all together:** To immediately recite the Basmalah after finishing the first Surah, and then immediately commence the first verse of the following Surah in the same breath.
- **Notice:** Connecting the end of the first surah to the basmalah **then pausing** is prohibited by consensus; the basmalah is to begin the surah, not to end it.

○ **Joining recitation of Surat Al-Anfal Followed by Surat Al-Tawbah**

The reciter should begin with two phrases: **A- End of Al-Anfal, B- Start of Al-Tawbah.** Here, there are three options:

- 1- **Separation:** By pausing for a while and taking one's breath after reciting the last verse of Surat Al-Anfal.
- 2- **Making a breathless pause (Sakt):** By pausing for a short period after reciting the last verse of Surah Al-Anfal, without taking a new breath before resuming the recitation.
- 3- **Joining:** By reciting the last verse of Surat Al-Anfal with the first verse of Surat Al-Tawbah in the same breath and without making a breathless pause.

Review



- Isti'adhah: a phrase by means of which one seeks refuge and shelter with Allah against the accursed Satan.**
- The rule of isti'adhah is that it is recommended/preferable to say at the beginning of recitation, and it is not part of the Qur'an.**
- The best formula of isti'adhah is: "أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم".**
- It is recommended to say the isti'adhah out loud in two cases, and quietly in four cases.**
- The reciter does not repeat the isti'adhah if he stops urgently such as sneezing and he repeats it if he speaks of something outside the Qur'an.**
- The scholars agree that the basmalah is mandatory at the beginning of each surah except surat Al-Tawba (Bara'a).**
- The scholars agree that the basmalah is part of an ayah in surat Al-Naml and at the beginning of surat Al-Fatiha.**
- If the reciter begins reciting in the middle of a surah, he can say bismillah or leave it.**
- When beginning recitation with any surah except Al Tawba, the reciter has four options to choose from.**
- When connecting surat Al Anfal to Al Tawba, the reciter has three options: wasl (connecting), qate' (stopping), sakt (breathless pause).**

Test Your Knowledge!



A- Fill in the blanks:

1. The wisdom in saying the isti'adhah out loud is _____ whereas the wisdom of saying it quietly is _____.
2. It is recommended for the reciter to say the isti'adhah out loud if he is in between other people and he is _____.
3. If the reciter is reciting alone, it is recommended for him to say the isti'adhah _____.
4. The isti'adhah is a phrase by means of which one seeks _____ and _____ in Allah swt against the _____.
5. If the reciter recites out loud, and someone is listening to them, he should say the isti'adhah _____.
6. The scholars have agreed on the presence of the basmalah at the beginning of surat _____ and as part of an ayah in surat _____.
7. The rule of the basmalah at the beginning of surat Al Tawba is _____ and that is because it includes _____.
8. When connecting two surahs except surat Al Tawba the reciter has _____ options.

B- True or False:

1. If the reciter discusses tafsir of a Qur'anic ayah with his teacher, then he should repeat the isti'adhah. ()
2. It is recommended/preferable to say the isti'adhah loudly in the prayers performed out loud, and quietly in the prayers performed quietly. ()
3. The scholars have agreed that the isti'adhah is part of the Qur'an. ()
4. The best formula for isti'adhah is "أعوذ بالله السميع العليم من الشيطان الرجيم". ()
5. If the reciter does not say the isti'adhah at the beginning of recitation, then he has sinned. ()
6. If the reciter begins his recitation from the beginning of surat Al-Naml, he should say the basmalah. ()
7. The prophet (pbuh) did not know the end of a surah until "أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم" was revealed to him. ()

