



An Explanation of the Phrases in the Tashahhud

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī from the hadīth of Abū Ḥumaid (رضي الله عنه) that “...when the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) would sit after two units he would sit on his left leg and prop up his right foot”¹

Then he would say,

{التحيات لله والصلوات والطيبات، السلام عليك أبا النبي ورحمة الله وبركاته، السلام علينا
وعلى عباد الله الصالحين،أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله، وأشهد أن محمداً عبده ورسوله}

At-tahiyātu li-llāhi, wa-ṣ-ṣalawātu wa-ṭ-ṭayyibātu. as-salāmu ‘alayka
’ayyuhā n-nabiyyu wa rahmatu -llāhi wa barakātuhu. as-salāmu
‘alaynā wa ‘alā ‘ibādi -llāhi ṣ-ṣalihīna. ’ashhadu ’an lā ’ilāha ’illa -llāhu
wa ’ashhadu ’anna muhammadan ‘abduhu wa rasūluhū.

“All the compliments and best regards prayers, and good things are due to Allāh. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and Allāh’s mercy and blessings be on you. Peace be upon us and the true pious worshippers of Allāh). I bear testimony there is no deity worthy of worship in truth except Allāh, and I bear testimony that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger.”

¹ Bukhārī (828)



Bukhārī reported from 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

{فَإِذَا جَلَسْتُمْ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي الصَّلَاةِ فَلْيُقْبِلُ التَّحْمِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ، وَ...}

“When one of you sits in prayer then say, ‘All the compliments and...’”² and he mentioned the whole thing.

Muslim reported it with the wording, “قَدْ”. (Essentially indicating the same meaning; to sit).

“At-tahiyyāt”: The people of knowledge said: The ‘Tahiyyah’ is every word that denotes the greatness of the one being addressed, so the meaning of ‘at-tahiyyātu li-llāhi’ is that all forms of greatness are for Allāh, deservedly and specifically, so Allāh is deserving of the praise and greatness, and He is specified with the greatness in which no one resembles Him.

“As-salawāt”: That is the known prayer, all the five prayers and Jum’ah (Friday) prayer, Witr, as well the supererogatory and other than them. All the prayers, no one is worthy of them except Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, and the first prayer that enters into that is the actual prayer you are praying now (at the time of saying this supplication).

“At-tayyibāt”: They are the beautiful descriptions that Allāh the Mighty and Majestic is attributed with, (in addition it means) the goodness that we perform. Hence, the ‘Tayyibāt to Allāh’ are the beautiful descriptions and characteristics that are for Allāh, just as the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

{إِنَّ اللَّهَ طَيِّبٌ لَا يَقْبِلُ إِلَّا طَيِّبًا}

² Bukhārī (6230)



“Indeed Allāh is Ṭayyib and does not accept anything except the Ṭayyib (all of that which is good).”³

Every good from statements and actions or attributes, then it is for Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic. Allāh speaks the truth and guides to the straight path. Similarly, Allāh accepts the ‘*Tayyibāt*’ (goodness) from us to Him. As for the evil and debase affairs then Allāh will not accept them due to the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ), “Indeed Allāh is Ṭayyib and does not accept anything except the Ṭayyib (all of that which is good).”⁴

“*As-salāmu ‘alayka ‘ayyuḥā n-nabiyyu.*” *as-Salām* is a name from the names of Allāh , just as Allāh said,

الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ الْسَّلَامُ

‘The King, the Holy, the One Free from all defects...’ [al-Hashr: 23]

And the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّلَامُ

“Indeed Allāh is *As-salām*.”⁵

However, here in this place it is not a name from the names of Allāh, the intent behind *as-Salām* here is *Taslīm*, in other words, the peace of Allāh upon you. Meaning that Allāh safeguards you, O Prophet, from every evil, and safeguards the legislation from every evil, since in the preservation of the *Shari’ah* (divine legislation) of the Messenger (ﷺ) is safeguarding of him too.

³ Muslim (1015)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Bukhārī (831)



The evidence that safeguarding of the legislation is a safeguarding of the Prophet (ﷺ) is that if a person was to make a statement, and the people started abusing this statement, the abuse of the statement would in effect be abuse of the one who said it too. So when you say, 'Peace be upon you O Prophet', you are supplicating to Allāh to safeguard him and his legislation (from abuse or wrongdoing).

We said, '*Salām*' here means '*Taslīm*' i.e. peace of Allāh be upon you, so can the Arabic pattern of words upon the scale of '*fi'āl*' have the meaning of the words upon the scale '*tafīl*'? (as suggested here)?

The answer is yes. For instance, the word '*kalām*' can have the meaning of '*taklīm*' (to speak to); hence '*Salām*' has the meaning of '*Taslīm*', peace from Allāh upon you O Prophet.

So you are asking Allāh to safeguard His Prophet (ﷺ) and to safeguard his legislation from every deficiency and shortfall.

There is an issue in your statement '*'Alayka*', 'upon you', from two angles:

1- How can it be correct that he is addressed in the prayer directly, since he is from the humans, and the Prophet (ﷺ) has stated,

{إِنَّ هَذِهِ الصَّلَاةَ لَا يَصْلُحُ فِيهَا شَيْءٌ مِّنْ كَلَامِ النَّاسِ}

“Indeed this prayer, no speech of humans (addressing anyone besides Allāh) is correct within it.”⁶

We say: addressing the Prophet (ﷺ) here is an exemption from his statement, “Indeed this prayer, no speech of humans (addressing anyone besides Allāh) is

⁶ Muslim (537)



correct within it”, hence the scholars said if the one praying addresses anyone else besides Allāh and His messenger by using the ‘*Kāf*’ of addressing someone (the pronoun ‘*Kāf*’ that indicates you are addressing someone in Arabic), his prayer is invalidated. If a man entered upon you whilst you are praying and said, ‘*Assalamu ’Alayka*’, so you replied, ‘*Wa’Alayka as-Salām*’, your prayer is nullified, except if you were ignorant of that ruling.

2- How can it be correct that he is addressed and he is absent and does not hear, and he is far from you? In fact, after his death he is deceased (ﷺ).

The answer: Our address to him (speaking in the direct manner to him will be transferred to him, for indeed the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

{صَلُّوْا عَلَيَّ فَإِنْ صَلَّأْتُكُمْ تَبَلُّغُنِي حِينَ شَرِّكُمْ}

“Send you supplication of peace upon me, for indeed your supplication of peace reaches me wherever you are.”⁷

So if you supplicate for peace upon him, it reaches him from wherever you are, and due to the strength of your recollection of the Prophet (ﷺ) you address him as if he is present in front of you even if he is far away.

“*Wa rahmatu-llāh*”, 'and the mercy of Allāh.' Mercy along with peace has in its completion, since through mercy arises the attainment of the objective (goodness), and through peace arises the removal of what is feared (evil). If therefore, peace and mercy are combined, what the person wants is completed for him (attainment of good and removal of evil), so you ask Allāh to have mercy upon him and His peace to be upon him.

⁷ Abū Ya’lā (1/361)



As for '**Barakāt**', 'the blessings': The word '*Barakāt*' is the plural of the word '*Barakah*' (blessing), and *Barakah* is the abundance of goodness and its continuation. The scholars of language say it is derived from the word '*birka*', and that is a collection of water a (lake or something of that nature, whether larger or smaller), and typically it is large and the water is stationary within it (not flowing like a river).

The summary of the meaning is that you ask Allāh that He safeguards His messenger (ﷺ), and that He encompasses him in mercy and blessings.

Then you move on to "**Assalāmu 'Alaynā**", 'peace be upon us'. The phrase 'upon us', if we say it means the Muslims as a whole, that may bring about an issue with the statement, 'upon the righteous servants of Allāh' (righteous specified as opposed to all Muslims), and if we were to say it means all of the Islamic Ummah [nation] who are the Ummah [nation] (nation, followers) of Muḥammad (ﷺ), the meaning of the righteous servants is then every righteous servant in the Heavens and the Earth.

And if we say the meaning is the congregation (those currently praying with you), it may cause a problem as well since the person may not have anyone with him, he may be praying alone. Therefore, the best of the statements (explanations) is that we say, 'upon us' i.e. the Ummah [nation] of the Prophet (ﷺ), and 'upon the righteous servants' includes every righteous servant in the Heavens and the Earth due to the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ),

{ إِذَا فَعَلْتُمْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ سَلَّمْتُمْ عَلَى كُلِّ عَبْدٍ لِلَّهِ صَالِحٍ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ }



“So, when you have said this, then you have surely sent the greetings to every good (pious) slave - worshipper of Allāh, whether he be in the heavens or the Earth.”⁸

Even the Angels, because the companions used to say, “*Salām* (peace) upon Jibrīl, upon Mikā’il”. So the Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Say, peace be upon us and upon the good (pious) slaves of Allāh, so, when you have said this, then you have surely sent the greetings to every good (pious) slave - worshipper of Allāh, whether he be in the heavens or the Earth.”⁹ The Angels are from the pious slaves of Allāh, without doubt, just as Allāh said:

﴿بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكَرْمُونَ - لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“They are but honored slaves. They speak not until He has spoken, and they act on His command.” (al-Anbiyā: 26-27)

“*Ashhadu An Lā Ilāha illa Allāh*” ‘I bear testimony there is no deity worthy of worship in truth except Allāh.’ ‘*Ashhadu*’ meaning I attest and acknowledge with my heart just as someone does upon physically seeing something with his eye.

Hence it is said 'أشهد' 'ashhadu' and not 'أقر' 'ugirru' (I attest), because it is as if this attestation is a definitive attestation just like a person is absolutely certain of what he sees with his own eye.

Your statement '*An Lā Ilāha illa Allāh*', (there is no deity worthy of worship in truth except Allāh), I hear a lot the people saying, "أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ" (*Ashhadu An na Lā Ilāha illa Allāh*... with stress upon the ‘noon’ as a *shaddah*), and this is a mistake in accordance to the rules of Arabic grammar. Rather we say,

⁸ Bukhārī (1202)

⁹ Ibid.



‘Ashhadu An Lā...’ lightly, (no *shaddah* or stress on the ‘noon’), and we amalgamate it with the ‘lām’, because ‘Anna’ stressed with a *shaddah* does not enter into a negative sentence, rather the lightened version instead of the stressed one does.

Your statement, “*Lā Ilāha illa Allāh*”: ‘ilāh’ means the one worshipped, so it is upon the Arabic pattern of words upon ‘fī’al’ with the meaning of ‘mafūl’, and this occurs a lot in the Arabic language. For example, there occurs *ghirās* with the meaning of *maghrīs*, (something planted), also ‘*bina*’ meaning ‘*mabni*’ (something built), and ‘*firāsh*’ meaning ‘*mafrūsh*’ (something laid down e.g. carpet).

The meaning of ‘*ma'lūh*’ is ‘*Ma'būd*’(the one worshipped), and the evidence is the statement of Allāh:

﴿وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَأَجْتَنِبُوا الْطَّغْوَةَ﴾

“And verily, We have sent among every Ummah [nation] (community, nation), a Messenger (proclaiming), ‘Worship Allāh alone, and avoid (or keep away from) Taghūt (all false deities)” (an-Nahl: 36).

Allāh also stated:

﴿وَمَا آتَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِنَّ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ﴾

“And We did not send any messenger before you (O Muḥammad) but we inspired him (saying) none has the right to be worshipped except I (Allāh), so worship Me, (alone and none else).” (al-Anbiyā: 25).

Hence, ‘ilāh’ means *Ma'būd* (the worshipped one), therefore meaning, there is no deity to be worshipped in truth except Allāh.



Here there is an issue; we witness upon this Earth that which is worshipped besides Allāh; statues are worshipped besides Allāh, idols are worshipped besides Allāh, trees are worshipped besides Allāh, people are worshipped besides Allāh, the Angels are worshipped besides Allāh, the Sun is worshipped besides Allāh, the Moon is worshipped besides Allāh, cows are worshipped besides Allāh, all these are worshipped besides Allāh, so how can it be correct we say there is no deity to be worshipped except Allāh?

The answer: There is an erased section to the statement that is required by necessity, and the erased section has the meaning of “truth”, meaning there is no deity in truth deserving of worship except Allāh. Based upon this, the predicate of the ‘Lā’ is erased, and it is not what comes after “*illa*”. What is after is *Badal* of it (a substitute), in other words, there is no deity in truth deserving of worship except Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, as for what is worshipped besides Allāh then it is false, just as Allāh stated:

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ هُوَ الْبَطِلُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ
الْكَبِيرُ

“That is because Allāh He is the truth, (the only true God of all that exists, who has no partners or rivals with Him), and that what they (the polytheists) invoke besides Him, it is falsehood, and verily Allāh He is the Most High, the Most Great” (al-Hajj: 62).

“*Wa ’ashhadu ’anna Muḥammadan ’abduhu wa rasūluhū*” ‘and I bear testimony that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger’: You testify that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger, so he is a servant under the



command of His Lord, and he is not someone to be worshipped, he is certainly a Messenger and not a liar. Due to this the scholars said a servant is not worshipped, and a messenger is not belied, may the peace and salutations of Allāh be upon him.

Look at the order!

{التحيات لـه والصلوات والطيبات}

“All the compliments and the best regards prayers, and good things are due to Allāh.”

This is the right of Allāh.

{السلام علـيـك أـعـيـدـهـا أـلـنـبـيـي}

“Peace be upon you O Prophet.”

This is the right of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)

{السلام علـيـنـا}

“Peace be upon us.”

This is your right.

{وعـلـيـ عـبـادـهـ اللـهـ الصـالـحـينـ}

“Peace be upon the good slaves of Allāh.”

This is the right of the pious servants generally.

So the first right upon the person is the right of Allāh, then the right of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), then your own right, as the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said,



“Begin with yourself...”¹⁰, then the right of the people as a whole generally.

Here we gave precedence to the *Salām* upon the Prophet (ﷺ) over and above ourselves, because it is obligatory we give precedence to the Prophet (ﷺ) over ourselves, and because of this it is obligatory upon every believer to sacrifice himself for the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). For indeed his right upon us is greater than our own right upon ourselves, and greater than the right of our parents upon us. Therefore, due to this the *Salām* upon him is given precedence.

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¹⁰ Muslim (997)