

The Impact of Misinterpretation and Mistranslation of Islamic Terms on the Quran's Doctrinal Integrity: The Cases of the "Basmalah", "Read" (*Iqra*), and "Worship" (*Ibadah*)

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Submitted: 28/11/2025

Accepted: 12/05/2026

Published: 10/06/2026

Abstract:

This investigation examines Quranic texts to explore misinterpretations and their consequences. The study focuses on three elements: the Basmalah, *Iqra*, and *worship*. The Basmalah, opening nearly all chapters, reflects God's mercy and compassion; its misinterpretation distorts the understanding of Allah's uniqueness. *Iqra*, translated as "read" or "recite," emphasizes knowledge, reflection, and learning; misreading it affects Surah Al-Alaq and the Quran overall. *Worship* includes not only ritual acts but also social and scientific deeds; misunderstanding it limits comprehension of its broader meaning. An interdisciplinary methodology was adopted, employing lexicons, dictionaries, and etymological studies. Case studies illustrated misinterpretations and their impacts. Experts from linguistics, theology, and science ensured faithful analysis. This approach enhances accurate interpretation and reliable translation of the Quranic text.

Keywords:

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Religions were born alongside humanity and have always served as a refuge for people in times of distress, fear, and joy. Thanks to religions, humanity successfully faced natural disasters, as well as health, commercial, and political challenges. Religions have always been, and still are, the cement that strengthens the bonds between members of the same community. Unfortunately, the misinterpretation and mistranslation of the meanings of sacred texts have plunged humanity into intermittent wars, with each religion claiming superiority and viewing others as threats. Worse still, such misinterpretations have caused problems within the same community and even within individual families.

1-1. Research Problem and Objectives

This study aims to explore this phenomenon by selecting examples from the major Abrahamic religions, where the scientific dimensions of certain religious terms were entirely ignored or overlooked. This neglect has caused significant threat to these sacred texts, leading some people to reject and even ridicule the religion and culture of their forefathers, dating back thousands of years. Hence, the main problem addressed in this research is the misinterpretation and inappropriate translation of certain religious terms in sacred texts from a scientific perspective and its impact on individual behavior and society as a whole. This study argues that an accurate interpretation of religious texts, led by experts and incorporating both linguistic and scientific perspectives, can prevent misinterpretations that lead to social and theological conflicts within the same religion and between world religions.

1-2. Rationale and Significance

Given the increasing role of religious discourse in modern societies, understanding the impact of mistranslations and misinterpretations can foster intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Consequently, our study attempts to offer a multidisciplinary approach to religious textual interpretation, incorporating linguistic, scientific, and theological insights, so that humans do not fall into the mazes of sorcery, myths, and naïve knowledge, causing religions to turn from a tool of

tolerance, understanding, and peace into instruments of backwardness and fanaticism.

1-3. Scope and Limitations

The study focuses on how to correctly interpret the meanings of religious texts while taking into account both literary and scientific perspectives. It investigates case studies of terms that have been misinterpreted, specifically from the Quran, the holy book of Muslims. The case studies include three main elements in the Quran: the Basmalah, the introductory phrase of the surah, along with the word "Read" (IQRA); the first word of the first verse of Surah Al-Alaq; and the word "worship" in "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Quran, 51:56). However, this paper is limited to selected Quranic verses and does not extend to interpreting other religious texts worldwide.

1-4. Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following key questions regarding the misinterpretation and mistranslation of some Islamic terms:

1. How has the Islamic term "worship" been misinterpreted and mistranslated across different historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts?
2. How has the Islamic term "read" in Surah Al-Alaq been misinterpreted and mistranslated across different historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts?
3. Why does the English translation of the Basmalah fail to convey its true Arabic meaning?
4. How does this Basmala mistranslation affect the understanding of God's uniqueness and incomparability?

1-5. Methodology

To ensure both reliability and validity the study adopted a multifaceted approach:

- Using lexicons and etymological studies to determine the exact meanings of these religious terms.
- Consulting experts such as linguists and theologians to obtain a precise understanding of these concepts.
- Implementing artificial intelligence as a tool to collect data from authentic sources and in a few cases, as a translation tool By integrating these approaches, this study attempts to provide a more accurate interpretation of Islamic texts and Allah's true message.

2. Literature Review

The interpretation of religious texts has been shaped by the cultural, intellectual and technological advances of different epochs. In Antiquity and the Middle Ages, for example, theologians focused on the spiritual and moral teachings of these texts, often using a literary approach to explain their meaning. Life at that time was heavily influenced by long-standing dogmatic rules and views upheld by the Church. Explaining scientific phenomena was considered a sin and often persecuted. In this respect, Wikipedia contributors (n.d) wrote: n 1633, Galileo was found "vehemently suspect of heresy" by the Roman Inquisition for advocating the heliocentric model, which posits that the Sun is at the center of the universe and that the Earth moves around it. Consequently, he was required to recant his views and was placed under house arrest for the remainder of his life".

This focus was partly due to the limited scientific knowledge of the theologians during those periods, which made interpreting certain terms within a scientific framework challenging and sometimes sinful. For instance, words or concepts related to natural phenomena, such as the movement of celestial bodies have influenced scientific hypotheses for a long time, were frequently understood metaphorically rather than scientifically (A. Norwick 2006).The lack of empirical investigation tools has often pushed researchers to rely on allegorical or symbolic explanations. While this method has boosted the spiritual dimension of texts, it has often obscured their potential for scientific implementation.

2-1-2-1. Misinterpreted Concepts: Brief Overview

2.1.1 The Term "Clay" in the Quran (32:7) and the Book of Genesis (2:7)

Many scriptures describe humans as having been created from "clay" or "dust." This description has been interpreted as a metaphor for human humility and fragility. nevertheless, recent scientific research suggests that clay minerals must have played a crucial role in the origin of life, acting as catalysts for biochemical processes. According to Pak-Harvey (2013) clay had provided the ideal environment for early biochemical reactions.

2-1-2. The Term "Light"

Religious expressions describing "light" are often understood figuratively as symbols of divine truth. In Christianity, for example, light symbolises Christ, divine truth and salvation. Jesus said in John 8:12: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life". In the Quran, Surah An-Nur (24:35), known as Ayat an-Nur (verse of light), states: "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp....". While these interpretations are worthy of note, they may also refer to actual physical phenomena, such as the propagation of electromagnetic waves or the nature of photons. One of the most striking scientific ideas in the Qur'an is the distinction between sunlight (ḍiyā') and moonlight (nūr). The Qur'an distinguishes between:

- **Ḍiyā'** (ضياء) → A self-luminous, radiant light, which aligns with the sun's nuclear fusion process that generates its own light and heat.
- **Nūr** (نور) → A reflected or borrowed light, which matches the moon's nature as a non-luminous body that reflects sunlight.

The Quranic description aligns with modern astrophysics, confirming that the sun produces light through nuclear fusion, while the moon merely reflects it. This alignment of scriptural language with modern scientific findings demonstrates how a scientific perspective can enhance our understanding of ancient texts, revealing their profound connections to natural laws. Thus, misinterpreting these words purely in a literary sense can obscure their potential scientific significance.

2-2. The Renaissance and Enlightenment: A Shift in Interpretation

The Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment brought important developments in science and philosophy, challenging established interpretations. These advances led to new efforts to reconcile religious texts with emerging scientific knowledge. The Renaissance gave rise to an intellectual movement called humanism. Among its many principles, humanism promotes the idea that man is at the centre of his own universe and should embrace human achievements in education, the classical arts, literature and science (Trang Do, 2023). However, the process met with

some resistance, as literal interpretations remained dominant in many circles.

2-3. Interpretation in Islamic Contexts

In a purely Islamic context, a clear misinterpretation problem arose when a team of scientists, led by Thomas Armstrong, launched a universal project investigating the theory of Multiple Intelligences and its relationship with cultures worldwide. Armstrong reached out to religious scholars, inviting them to share insights on the place of Gardner's theory in Islam. Due to a misunderstanding or lack of scientific knowledge, some scholars responded negatively, declaring that in Islam, God is One, and thus there is no pluralism, which they equated with a rejection of the concept of multiple intelligences.

Armstrong later collaborated with scholars who explored the matter further, concluding that the concept of multiple intelligences does indeed exist in the Quran by relating it to Allah's 99 names. In this context, the interpretation was built on scientific facts rather than literary interpretation. For instance, the interpretation of God's name, "The Wise," was not merely a philosophical concept but an aptitude rooted in the brain, observable and measurable through functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) (Hammoudi,A. 2011).

2.4 Commonly Misinterpreted Quranic Words

The interpretation of religious texts in an Islamic context had often been influenced by cultural, political and intellectual issues. In ancient times, religious scholars generally focused on the spiritual and moral teachings of the sacred texts, often using a literary approach while tackling meaning. This focus was due to the lack of scientific research tools capable of scientifically interpreting religious terms and, at times, monopolising religion and controlling society.

In an article titled *More than One Hundred Quranic Words That Some People Misunderstand*, Al-Sunaid (2012) analysed and explained several misinterpreted Quranic words:

2-4-1. "Yashri" in Al-Baqarah: 207

- "Yashri nafsahu" means "sells it", as the word "yashri" in Arabic means "sells", unlike "yashtari", which means "buys".

- Arabic text:

"يشري نفسه" تعني "يبيعها"، فكلمة "يشري" تعني "يبيع"، بخلاف كلمة "يشترى".

2-4-2. "Qa'iloon" in Surah Al-A'raf: 4

- "Faja'aha ba'suna bayatan aw hum qa'iloon": "qa'iloon" is derived from "qaylulah", which means "nap", and not from "qawl", which means speech.

- Arabic text :

"فجاءها بأسنا بياتاً أو هم قائلون": من القيلولة أي في وقت القائلة منتصف النهار، وليست من القول.

2-5. Conclusion

Today, with access to vast scientific knowledge, technology, and advanced linguistic tools, we are better equipped to revise most religious texts and achieve a more accurate interpretations of mistaken concepts and hence understanding the genuine message of the quran.

3. Revising Misinterpreted Concepts: Three Quranic Cases

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to revise common misinterpretations of three important Quranic concepts: the basmalah, the word iqra (read), and the word ya'boudou (worship). It also attempts to highlight their importance in terms of linguistic precision, theological accuracy, and scholarly dimension.

3.2 Case Studies of Misinterpreted Quranic Terms

3.2.1 Case One: The Term "Read" (Iqra')

3.2.1.1 Context and Meaning

Surah Al-'Alaq is the first revelation to Prophet Muhammad, occurring in the thirteenth year before the Hijrah. It is the 96th surah in the Qur'an consists of 19 verses. The surah begins with the imperative verb:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created" . The revelation was first received while Prophet Muhammad while was in the Cave of Hira. The angel appeared to him and said, "Read." The Prophet replied, "I am not a reader." The angel then took him, embraced him until he was exhausted, and released him, repeating the command: "Read." The Prophet again replied, "I am not a reader." This occurred three times until the angel finally recited:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created. (1) Created man from a clot. (2) Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous. (3) Who taught by the pen. (4) Taught man that which he did not know."

This Meccan surah begins with the name of God and directly addresses the Messenger at the very moment of his first contact with divine revelation. The command directs him to read in the name of Allah, emphasizing divine creation, teaching, and the unknown as the foundation of knowledge.

3.2.1.2 The Word "Iqra" (Read) in Surah Al-'Alaq: Misinterpretation and Mistranslation

The word "Iqra" has been widely misunderstood and mistranslated. A variety of Qur'an translations, including AI-based translation software, interpret this term as referring to the reading skill, meaning "to look at words or symbols and understand what they mean" or "to recite." For instance, different translations render the verse as follows:

- o NobleQuran.com: "Read! In the name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists)."
- o ClearQuran.com: "Read: In the Name of your Lord who created."
- o Quran.com: "Read, 'O Prophet,' in the Name of your Lord Who created."
- o MyIslam.org: "Recite in the name of your Lord who created."

However, considering the context of the revelation, the angel's command took place in a cave Hira where there was no book or written texts to read. Moreover, the person commanded, the Prophet Muhammad, was illiterate and could neither read nor write. Therefore, it is not

appropriate to translate the word "Iqra' " as "reading a text or book". Instead, the term should be understood in a scholarly and precise sense that is in keeping with the circumstances of revelation and scientific research today. In this section, however, we will focus on the word "reading" (iqra'), which is the backbone of Surah Al-'Alaq, and perhaps of the entire Qur'an:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created, created man from a clot. Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the pen, taught man that which he knew not."As previously noted, this verse highlights three important elements: reading, creation, and teaching, along with the mention of the pen and knowledge of the unknown. It is the first surah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.

The word "READ" in this verse, which is considered the first case of study, is not simply "a cognitive process that involves decoding symbols to arrive at meaning" (Study.com). Rather, it stresses the idea of observing and contemplating to learn from nature and solve genuine problems. It also fosters humanity to actively engage with the world around them through higher order thinking, seeking knowledge and skills as a way to solve their daily problems and lead a peaceful, prosperous life. So what is the true meaning of « READ » in Arabic?

3.2.1.3 Definitions and Interpretations of "Reading" in the Literature

In this section, we will explore the broader and scholarly meanings of the word "reading," extending beyond the traditional concept of decoding symbols to understand written texts. We will treat it as a cognitive process that engages human senses to understand natural phenomena, gain insights, and apply them to solve real-life problems.

a. Traditional Definitions of Reading

The conventional definitions of reading include the following:

- o Reading (noun): The act of pronouncing written words aloud
- o Recitation (noun): The oral reading of books, often involving repetition or chanting.
- o Loud reading: Pronouncing written text audibly, as opposed to silent

reading.

- o Silent Reading : Reading text silently as opposed to loud reading

a. Broader Meanings of "Reading" with Scientific and Pragmatic Dimensions

Certain derived meanings of read offer a more precise understanding of the term. Examples of these derived meanings in Arabic include: (Al-Maani Dictionary)www.almaany.com/home.php?language=english&word=

- o Mind reading: The ability to perceive others' thoughts beyond sensory perception.
- o Palm or cup reading: Fortune-telling based on interpreting the palm of the hand or coffee cup patterns.
- o Face reading: Observing and inferring emotions or thoughts from facial expressions.
- o Learning by heart / rote learning: Reciting the Qur'an from memory without referring to a written copy.
- o Reading between the lines: Understanding implied or hidden meanings.
- o Reading the future : Claiming to predict events through palmistry or other divinatory practices.
- o Fortune telling
- o Mind reading
- o Signal reading / interpreting signals
- o Lip reading
- o Palm reading / palmistry
- o Browsing / skimming / perusing
- o Examining / inspecting / scrutinizing / scanning

- Reading an omen / interpreting an omen
- Reading the sea: Interpreting ocean currents, waves, and weather patterns to navigate or predict maritime conditions.
- Reading the tides: Analyzing tidal patterns to determine the best times for fishing or coastal activities.
- Reading the plants: Observing plant growth or health to assess environmental conditions, soil quality, or predict seasonal changes.
- Reading animal behavior: Interpreting signs and actions of animals to understand their needs, emotions, or environmental changes.
- Reading the human body : Recognizing physical signs or symptoms to diagnose health conditions or understand emotional states (e.g., body language, posture).
- Reading plant leaves: Interpreting the color, shape, and condition of leaves to identify plant health or environmental stress.
- Reading the wind: Observing wind patterns to forecast weather or aid in navigation.
- Reading the sea: Interpreting ocean currents, waves, and weather patterns to navigate or predict maritime conditions.
- Reading the tides: Analyzing tidal patterns to determine the best times for fishing or coastal activities.
- Reading the plants: Observing plant growth or health to assess environmental conditions, soil quality, or predict seasonal changes.
- Reading animal behavior: Interpreting signs and actions of animals to understand their needs, emotions, or environmental changes.
- Reading the human body: Recognizing physical signs or symptoms to diagnose health conditions or understand emotional states (e.g., body language, posture).
- Reading the wind: Observing wind patterns to forecast weather or aid in navigation.

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- Reading the sky: Interpreting cloud formations and sky colors to predict weather changes or impending storms.
- Reading animal tracks: Analyzing footprints or signs left by animals to determine their species, movements, and behaviors.
- Reading the forest: Observing trees, plants, and wildlife in a forest environment to gauge its health, ecosystem balance, or seasonal changes.
- Reading the mountain: Assessing terrain features, such as slopes and rock formations, to evaluate stability or to forecast weather conditions.
- Reading the sky: Interpreting cloud formations and sky colors to predict weather changes or impending storms.

Based on these definitions, it becomes clear to us that reading is not limited to decoding written words to grasp meaning. The concept of reading extends beyond traditional text reading comprehension to a wide range of natural and scientific phenomena. It involves active observation, thoughtful analysis, and deeper understanding of the world surrounding us.

For instance, when the Angel instructed Prophet Muhammad to "read," it was a call for him to use engage his brain to observe, analyse, and draw inspiration from the world. This process was intended to enable him to address humanity's challenges and improve cultural and economic conditions, leading people to a more peaceful and prosperous life.

b. Verses Illustrating the Scientific Dimension of "Reading" in the Qur'an

The Qur'an repeatedly calls on humans to observe, reflect, and understand the world around them. This form of "reading" extends beyond written text to the signs in nature, human existence, and the universe.. This broader concept of reading aligns with « tafakkur » (deep reflection), « tadabbur » (contemplation), and « ta'aqqul » (intellectual reasoning). In the following verses, God instructs humanity to "read" the signs within nature and the universe.

Animals:

1. Surah An-Nahl , the Bee (16:5-8)

"And the cattle—He has created them for you; in them there is warmth and benefits, and from them you eat. And for you, there is beauty in them when you bring them home in the evening and when you take them out to pasture in the morning. And they carry your loads to lands you could not have reached except with great difficulty. Indeed, your Lord is Most Kind, Most Merciful."

2. Surah Al-An'am (6:38)

"And there is no creature on the earth or bird that flies with its wings except that they are communities like you. We have not neglected anything in the Book, then to their Lord, they will be gathered."

3. Surah Ya-Sin (36:71-73)

"Do they not see that We created for them, of what Our hands have made, cattle, and they are their owners? And We subdued them for them, so some of them they ride, and some they eat. And for them, therein are benefits and drinks. Will they not then give thanks?"

Mountains:

1. Surah An-Naba (78:6-7)

"Have We not made the earth a resting place? And the mountains as stakes?"

2. Surah An-Nahl (16:15)

"And He has set firm mountains in the earth so that it would not shake with you, and rivers and roads so that you may find your way."

3. Surah Al-Ghashiyah (88:19-20)

"And at the mountains—how they are set firm? And at the earth—how it is spread out?"

Humans :

7. Surah Adh-Dhariyat (51:20-21)

"And on the earth are signs for those who have certainty. And also in yourselves. Then will you not see?"

8. Surah Al-Insan (76:1-2)

"Has there not been a period of time when man was nothing to be mentioned? Indeed, We created man from a drop of mingled fluid so that We may test him, and We made him hearing and seeing."

9. Surah Fussilat (41:53)

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not enough that your Lord is a Witness over all things?"

Stars as a Means of Navigation

10. Surah An-Nahl (16:16)

"And by the stars, they are guided."

11. Surah Al-An'am (6:97)

"And it is He who placed for you the stars that you may be guided by them through the darkness of the land and sea. We have detailed the signs for a people who know."

The aforementioned Quranic verses are designed to stimulate human's reflection intellectual engagement. They can serve as valuable research themes that contribute to the advancement of science and humanity.

3.2.2 Case Two : The Word "Basmala" (بِسْمَلَا) :

A. Context and Meaning

The Basmala (Arabic: بِسْمَلَا, basmalah; also known by its opening words Bi-smi llāh; بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ, "In the name of God") is the formal name of the Islamic phrase "In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." It is one of the most significant phrases in Islam, recited by Muslims primarily before undertaking "good deeds."

The Basmala is also recited at the beginning of every chapter (surah) of the Qur'an, except for the ninth chapter, At-Tawbah. It contains three of

the traditional 99 names of God in Islam—Allah, ar-Rahman, and ar-Rahim—which are commonly translated as "God," "The Compassionate," and "The Merciful."

Some theologians argue that the Basmala is an integral part of the Qur'an and must be treated with the same reverence as the rest of the Holy Book.

A. Linguistic and Theological Analysis

From a linguistic perspective, Basmalah is a verbal noun formed by morphological abbreviation, an Arabic grammatical device that consists of condensing a sentence into a single term (Ibn Faris, Maqāyīs al-Lughā, 1979). The sentence itself consists of three fundamental elements:

"Bismi" (بِسْمِ) means "In the name of," signifying the seeking of blessings.

"Allāh" (الله) is the most comprehensive name of God in Islam.

"Ar-Raḥmān Ar-Raḥīm" (الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ) – two divine God's attributes derived from the root ر-ح-م, both expressing mercy but with distinct nuances:

Ar-Raḥmān: Refers to Allah's unlimited mercy encompassing all of creation

- Ar-Raḥīm: Refers to a more specific mercy granted specifically to believers.

(Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, 1370 AH).

D. Grammatical Analysis of the Basmala

The Basmalah consists of:

- A preposition and a genitive noun (جار ومجرور).
- A hidden verb (Kufan school) or a hidden subject (Basran school).
- A possessive noun (mudaf ilayh) and two adjectives (na'at).

Detailed Parsing:

- {بِسْمِ} (Bismi) → A preposition (bi) and a genitive noun (ism), related to an omitted verb estimated as "I begin" (أبدأ).

- {الله} (Allah) → A genitive noun (mudaf ilayh) related to "Bismi".
- {الرَّحْمَنُ} (Ar-Rahman) → A genitive adjective (na't) describing "Allah".
- {الرَّحِيمُ} (Ar-Rahim) → A second genitive adjective (na't) describing "Allah".

Thus, the verbal sentence implied in the Basmalah ("I begin in the name of Allah...") is an introductory statement (jumlaḥ ibtida'iyyah).

A. Situations Where the Basmala is Prescribed

The Basmalah, "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful", was revealed with every surah except At-Tawbah. It is prescribed in several instances, including:

❖ Reciting the Qur'an

We must say it when reciting the Qur'an since it can be found at the beginning of all surahs (chapters), except for Surah At-Tawbah

❖ In Prayer

According to Imam Al-Shafi'i the Basmalah is considered a verse of Al-Fatiha and of every surah, and hence we must say it.

❖ Beginning of Books, Letters, and Sermons

The Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) used started all his letters with the Basmalah. For instance his letters to kings, such as his letter to Heraclius, started as follows: "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to Heraclius, the ruler of Rome." (Reported by Al-Bukhari & Muslim).

This practice was also followed by previous prophets, as seen in the letter of Prophet Solomon (Sulayman) to Queen Bilqis: "Indeed, it is from Solomon, and indeed, it is [written]: In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful." (*Surah An-Naml: 29-30*).

❖ Before Eating

Imam An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) stated that the best way to say the Basmalah before eating is : 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.' However, if simply saying 'In the name of Allah,' it is sufficient and fulfills the Sunnah." (Al-Adhkar, 1/231).

B. The Legitimacy and Use of the Basmala

The Basmalah is recommended whenever performing righteous deeds. It is stated in Awn Al-Ma‘bud:

in the The Sunnah before beginning all good deeds we have to say: 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.'" (Awn Al-Ma‘bud, 13/152).

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Every matter of importance that does not begin with 'In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful' is cut off (from blessings)." (Saying reported by Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah, An-Nasa'i, and Abu Awanah in his Sahih).

B. Benefits of the Basmala

- Acting in accordance with hadith mentioned above.
- Gaining blessings (barakah): Al-Qarafi stated: "The purpose of saying the Basmalah is to bring blessings upon the act it precedes."
- Seeking Allah's assistance for the task one is about to begin.

C. The Healing Power of the Basmala in the Quran

In the Holy Quran, it is emphasized that healing comes from Allah alone, as He says: *"And when I am ill, it is He who cures me."* (Ash-Shu‘ara 26:80), but the **Basmala** (saying "Bismillah" – In the name of Allah) is used when reciting healing verses, reinforcing faith in Allah's power to grant recovery. Among the verses associated with healing is:

"And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers." (Al-Isra 17:82)

"Say, 'It is, for those who believe, a guidance and a healing.'" (Fussilat 41:44)

However, according to the prophetic tradition, Basmala can be used in Ruqyah in the Prophetic Tradition. Several hadiths confirm that the **Basmala**, is used in spiritual healing. Among them:

Placing the hand on the area of pain and saying the Basmala three times

The Prophet Muhammad peace upon him said: Place your hand at the place where you feel pain in your body and say Bismillah (in the name of Allah) three times and seven times A'udhu billahi wa qudratihi min sharri ma ajidu wa uhadhiru (I seek refuge with Allah and with His Power from the evil that I find and that I fear). The book of greetings <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2202>

A. Misinterpretation and Mistranslation of the Basmala

According to Al-Qurtubi , "Allah, Ar-Rahman, and Ar-Rahim" are divine names of God in Islam, carrying profound significance. Unfortunately, Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim are often misinterpreted and translated as adjectives not as names, "The Most Merciful" and "The Most Compassionate." It is worth mentioning that Superlative adjectives are used when comparing three or more things, such as: "The tallest student in the class", "The most popular game." Generally, superlatives indicate that something is at the highest level within its category, with no others surpassing it in that particular trait. With this in mind, how can we compare Allah—who is Unique and beyond all creation—to humans or even animals? How can we include Allah within the category of created beings when He is above all comparison?

The names of God hold great power and deeply influence human behavior and personality. It is immoral, illegal and unethical to reduce them to mere adjectives, as this alters the true nature of God, who is Unique and Incomparable.

The Uniqueness of Allah is highlighted in Surah Al-Ikhlâs, which describes the attributes of Allah, affirming His oneness and that He is As-Samad—the Absolute to whom all creation turns for their needs. The surah also emphasizes Allah's transcendence, declaring that nothing is like Him,

and that He has no equal or counterpart. Furthermore, Surah Al-Hashr :24, reinforces this divine uniqueness by emphasizing the 99 Names of Allah: "He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."

In this respect, Allah also says : He is Allah—there is no god except Him: the King, the Most Holy, the All-Perfect, the Source of Serenity, the Watcher 'of all', the Almighty, the Supreme in Might, the Majestic. Glorified is Allah far above what they associate with Him 'in worship'.

Conclusion

The Basmala is a fundamental phrase in Islamic spirituality. It represents Allah's presence, mercy, and blessing in whatever good deeds we accomplish. Its doctrinal, and psychological connotations make it a fundamental element of Islamic literature. Saying it regularly acknowledges that your success ultimately depends on Allah.

3.2.3 Case Three: The Word "Worship" (العبادة) :

3.2.3.1 Context and Meaning. "Worship" (العبادة)

According to the Quran Dictionary (Page.1), The trilateral root 'ayn bā dāl (ع ب د) occurs 275 times in the Quran, in six derived forms:

- 122 times as the form I verb 'abada (عَبَدَ)
- once as the form II verb 'abbad (عَبَّدَ)
- once as the adjective 'ābidāt (عَبِيدَات)
- nine times as the noun 'ibādat (عِبَادَات)
- 131 times as the noun 'abd (عَبْد)
- 11 times as the active participle 'ābid (عَابِد)

Unfortunately the interpretation of these forms are not correctly interpreted. If we take the interpretation of 'abd (عَبْد) literature, we'll find that this interpretation causes harm to the being of Allah and contradicts the uncomparable attributes of Allah as mentioned in the Quran.

**The Impact of Misinterpretation and Mistranslation
of Islamic Terms on the Quran's Doctrinal Integrity**

Examples of the term 'abd (عَبْدٌ)' which is interpreted as 'slave' appear in the translation of the following verses mentioned in Quran Dictionary (<https://corpus.quran.com/qurandictionary.jsp?q=Ebd>)

(3:15:24) bil-'ibādi of (His) slaves بِالْعِبَادِ وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرٍ بِالْعِبَادِ

(3:20:26) bil-'ibādi of [His] slaves بِالْعِبَادِ وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرٍ بِالْعِبَادِ

(3:30:26) bil-'ibādi to (His) [the] slaves بِالْعِبَادِ وَاللَّهُ رَعُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

(4:118:6) 'ibādika your slaves عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا

(4:172:6) 'abdan a slave لِلَّهِ يَكُونُ عَبْدًا لِلَّهِ

(6:18:4) 'ibādihi His slaves وَالْأَقْصَىٰ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ

(6:61:4) 'ibādihi His slaves وَالْأَقْصَىٰ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً

(6:88:9) 'ibādihi His slaves ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

(7:32:8) li 'ibādihi for His slaves قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ

(7:128:14) 'ibādihi His servants إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

(7:194:7) 'ibādun (are) slaves إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادًا أُمْتَأْتِكُمْ

(8:41:23) 'abdinā Our slave إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مَنَّتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ

(8:51:9) lil' 'abīdi to His slaves ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ

(9:104:9) 'ibādihi His slaves أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ

(10:107:21) 'ibādihi His slaves يُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

(12:24:18) 'ibādinā Our slaves عَنْهُ السُّوءَ وَالْفَحْشَاءَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُخْلَصِينَ

(14:11:16) 'ibādihi His slaves وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَمُنُّ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ

In the Holy Quran the term 'abd (عَبْدٌ)' 'abd does not have any relation with the degrading sense of slavery. Instead, it has a positive meaning signifying honored servitude, devotion, and a deep connection to God. Allah does not treat us as slaves , but as His free, respected, and responsible creatures.

Allah's rapport with humanity is not based on oppression, but mercy and justice. This is shown in most Quranic verses that value human dignity, like:

- "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea." (Quran 17:70)
- "Indeed, Allah does not wrong people in the least, but it is people who wrong themselves." (Quran 10:44)

The Commander of the Faithful, Umar ibn al-Khattab, expressed this idea in his famous statement: "Since when did you enslave the people, , when their mothers gave birth to them free?" Similarly, Ali ibn Abi Talib advised: "Do not be someone else when God has created you free."

The fundamental principle regarding people is that they are free by virtue of God's creation.

The very notion of being a servant of God ('abd) is a great honour, not a burden. It means accepting to follow the path of truth, wisdom and righteousness under the guidance of the Merciful. Islamic servitude to God is about love, submission and worship - not enslavement or coercion.

Below are some notable examples of the word "worship" (عبادة, عبد) and related forms) which appears multiple times throughout the Quran in various contexts:

1. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:21)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

"O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous."

2. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:83)

...وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ

"And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [saying], 'Do not worship except Allah'..."

3. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:172)

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

"If it is [only] Him you worship."

4. Surah Al-Fātiḥa (1:5)

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

"It is You we worship and You we ask for help."

5. Surah Al-Anbiya (21:25)

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ

"And We did not send any messenger before you except that We revealed to him that, 'There is no deity except Me, so worship Me.'"

6. Surah Al-Dhariyat (51:56)

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me."

7. Surah An-Nahl (16:36)

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ

"And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid false gods.'"

3.2.3.2 Interpreting and Translating "Worship" into English: Meanings and Nuances

Meaning of "Worship" in English Dictionaries

In English dictionaries, "worship" is generally defined as:

1. to honor or show reverence for as a divine being or supernatural power / to regard with great or extravagant respect, honor, or devotion (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/worship>)

2. the practice of showing respect for God or a god, by saying prayers, singing with others, etc.

(https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/worship_1)

3.to have or show a strong feeling of respect and admiration for God or a god <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/worship>

The definitions found in major English dictionaries confirm this understanding:

1. Oxford English Dictionary (OED):

Worship (noun): "The feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity."

Example: "The church was filled with worship and praise."

2. Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

Worship (noun): "The act of showing respect and love for a god, especially by praying with other people who believe in the same god."

Example: "They go to the mosque for worship every Friday."

3. Cambridge Dictionary:

Worship (noun): "The act of worshipping God or a god, often through praying or singing."

Example: "Local people have expressed their traditional forms of worship for centuries."

4. Collins English Dictionary:

Worship (noun): "The activity of showing great respect and love for a god, especially by praying in a religious building."

Example: "Sunday worship takes place at 10 a.m."

5. Online etymology dictionary

([https://www.etymonline.com/word/worship#:~:text=worship%20\(n.\),scipe%20\(see%20%2Dship\)](https://www.etymonline.com/word/worship#:~:text=worship%20(n.),scipe%20(see%20%2Dship) defines worship as)) defines worship as "high respect, honor, fame," from Old English *worðscip*, *wurðscip* (Anglian), *weorðscipe* (West Saxon) meaning "condition of being worthy, dignity, glory, distinction, honor, renown," from *weorð* "worthy". So worship" comes from the Old English *weorðscipe*, meaning "worthiness, honor, reverence." Over time, it evolved to signify acts of reverence toward a deity and later extended to describe intense admiration for people or things.

In a religious context, "worship" refers to acts of devotion and reverence toward God . It encompasses various forms, such as prayer, fasting, and rituals. In Christianity for instance, worship is "the act of honoring, adoring, and revering God with one's whole heart, mind, and soul. It goes beyond rituals or routines and involves a deep, personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ". (Free Bible Studies , <https://justordinarymen.com/day-of-worship/>)

In Islamic theology, worship ('ibādah) is broader than just rituals; it includes all actions done sincerely for God's sake, following His guidance, whether in prayer, daily work, or ethical behavior. According to al-islam.org (<https://al-islam.org/radiance-secrets-prayer-muhsin-qaraati/worship-ibadah>) worship ('ibadah) means the expression of abasement (dhillah), the highest form of humility and homage, before God. As to its importance, it is enough to state that worship is the purpose behind the creation of all beings and the mission (bi'thah) of the prophets (as) (the creational world ('alam at-takwin) and the legislative world ('alam at-tashri'), respectively)"

The Authentic Meaning of 'Worship' in the Quran

In the interpretations of the Holy Quran, the word (worship), as found in various verses denotes complete submission to Allah in every aspect of life. It encompasses ritual acts of worship such as prayer and fasting, and moral living, including benevolence, justice, and honesty. Essentially, the term refers to all the deeds and actions performed by humans for and in the name of God, which contribute to the advancement and improvement of human life.

Hard Work and Scholarship as Acts of Worship

Hard work and academic inquiry are considered forms of worship if they are carried out with sincerity and for the sake of Allah. Islam encourages striving on earth and contributing to its development through sincere work. Allah says: Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer – We will surely grant them a good life, and We will surely give them their reward according to the best of what they used to do." Similarly, seeking knowledge is regarded as one of the greatest acts of devotion. Similarly, a saying of the Prophet Muhammad states that learning a single verse from the Quran or gaining knowledge is more rewarding than performing numerous units of voluntary prayer. He also declared that "Whoever follows a path in pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make the path to Paradise easy for him." (Sahih Muslim) (HADEETHENC.COM, <https://hadeethenc.com/ar/browse/hadith/6267>)

This scholarship belief was illustrated in a story about two eminent Muslim scholars, Al-Fudayl ibn 'Iyad and Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak. It was said that Al-Fudayl spent the whole night in prayer, while Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak devoted his night to acquiring knowledge by reading books. When Al-Fudayl was asked which of the two scholars was superior in the eyes of Allah, he replied that Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak would receive a greater reward from Allah because he was dedicated to seeking knowledge and working to solve the problems of the community.

From these accounts, we may conclude that Islam considers acquiring knowledge as a kind of worship and places on it a high value, sometimes even elevating it above voluntary acts of worship. Still, as a reminder, the first ayah of the Quran begins with the word 'Read,' which signifies the pursuit of knowledge and is considered an act of worship.

Human's Daily Activities as an Act of Worship

When the intentions is for God's sake, almost all activities in Islam, from studying to working, and even the simple gesture of smiling are considered acts of worship. For instance in taking care of the environment, the Prophet Muhammad said: "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as charity." (Bukhari & Muslim). Responding to ups and downs of life with true patience is a worship. God says : "Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account."

Human Activities as Acts of Worship

The following are examples of human activities that God considers acts of worship and rewards accordingly.

1. Helping the Needy

Qur'an (2:267):

"O you who have believed, spend from the good things which you have earned and from that which We have produced for you from the earth...."

Explanation:

Speaking Kindly and Respectfully

Qur'an (33:70-71):

"O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice. He will [then] amend for you your deeds and forgive you your sins...."

Explanation: Speaking with kindness leads to personal and spiritual success.

3. Planting Trees

Islam recognising planting trees as an act of charity. Prophet Muhammad said: "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as a charity for him."

4. Exercising to maintain health

The Prophet Muhammad said: "Teach your children swimming, archery, and horse riding."

5. Taking Care of Animals because they deserve care and respect **Qur'an (6:38):**

"And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you.

● Conditions for Worldly Acts to Be Considered Worship

For daily activities to be counted as worship, the following conditions must be met:

- 1. Sincere Intention** – The act must be done for the sake of Allah.
- 2. Compliance with Islamic Teachings** – The action must be permissible in Islam.
- 3. Excellence and Dedication** – The work should be performed with sincerity and quality.

4. **Not Neglecting Religious Obligations** – Work should not distract from performing religious duties.

By fulfilling these conditions, daily activities, scientific research, and striving in worldly affairs become acts of worship through which a Muslim draws closer to Allah, thereby achieving a balance between worldly life and the Hereafter.

5. CONCLUSION

Religious texts, since ancient times, have witnessed misinterpretation, which in turn has led to mistranslation. This has caused significant harm to the way these texts were applied in people's daily lives. Today, with the advancement of science and the participation of various scientific fields, it is unethical, and even illegal, to leave the interpretation of these texts solely in the hands of theologians or linguists, as the interpretation would be incomplete. The Quran itself recommends this, as it focuses on science when reading Allah's holy book:

"Say, 'Are those who know equal to those who do not know ?' Only those who possess intellect take heed." (Az-Zumar: 9) and "Read in the name of your Lord who created, Created man from a clot, Read, and your Lord is the Generous, Who taught by the pen, Taught man that which he knew not." (Al-'Alaq: 1-5).

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1. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:21)

“O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous”

(*Qur'an*, 2:21, *Sahih International*, 1997, <https://quran.com/2/21>)

2. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:83)

“And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [saying], 'Do not worship except Allah'...”

(*Qur'an*, 2:83, *Sahih International*, 1997, <https://quran.com/2/83>)

3. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:172)

“If it is [only] Him you worship”

(*Qur'an*, 2:172, *Sahih International*, 1997, <https://quran.com/2/172>)

4. Surah Al-Fātiḥa (1:5)

“It is You we worship and You we ask for help”

(*Qur'an*, 1:5, *Sahih International*, 1997, <https://quran.com/1/5>)

5. Surah Al-Anbiya (21:25)

“And We did not send any messenger before you except that We revealed to him that, 'There is no deity except Me, so worship Me’”

(*Qur'an*, 21:25, *Sahih International*, 1997, <https://quran.com/21/25>)

6. Surah Al-Dharyat (51:56)

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me”

(*Qur'an*, 51:56, *Sahih International*, 1997, <https://quran.com/51/56>)

7. Surah An-Nahl (16:36)

“And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid false gods’”

(*Qur'an*, 16:36, *Sahih International*, 1997, <https://quran.com/16/36>)

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