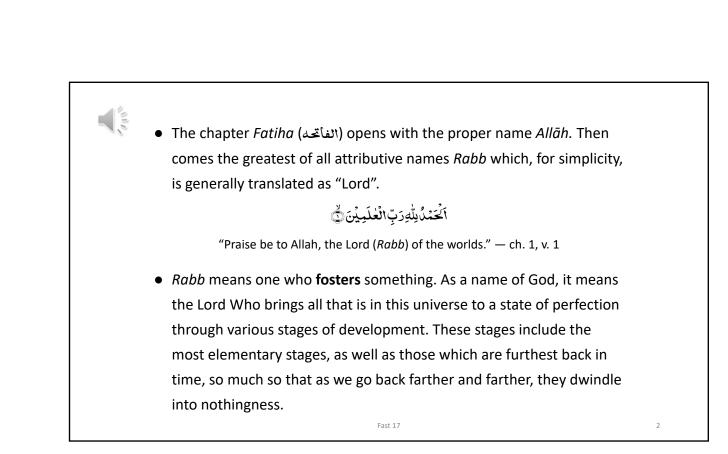


out prominently, and these four are exactly the names mentioned in the Opening chapter, *Surah Fatiha*. This chapter, by a consensus of opinion, and according to a saying of the Holy Prophet, is the essence of the Quran.

Fast 17



- This means that the word *Rabb* carries with it the idea of the Author of all existence. *Rabb* is thus the chief attribute of God. Hence it is that prayers are generally addressed to *Rabb*, and begin with the words *Rabba-nā*, that is, "our Lord". Indeed, after the proper name Allah, the Quran has given the greatest prominence to the name *Rabb*.
- The order adopted by the Holy Quran in speaking of the Divine attributes is quite logical. *Allāh*, the proper name, comes first of all in the Opening chapter, and this is followed by *Rabb*, the most important of the attributive names.



• While the name Allah is found in the Holy Quran some 2800 times, *Rabb* occurs about 960 times, no other name being so frequently mentioned.

 Next in importance to *Rabb* are the names *Raḥmān* (Beneficent), *Raḥīm* (Merciful) and *Mālik* (Master), which follow *Rabb* in the Opening chapter:

الرَّحْمْنِ الرَّحِيمِ ٢

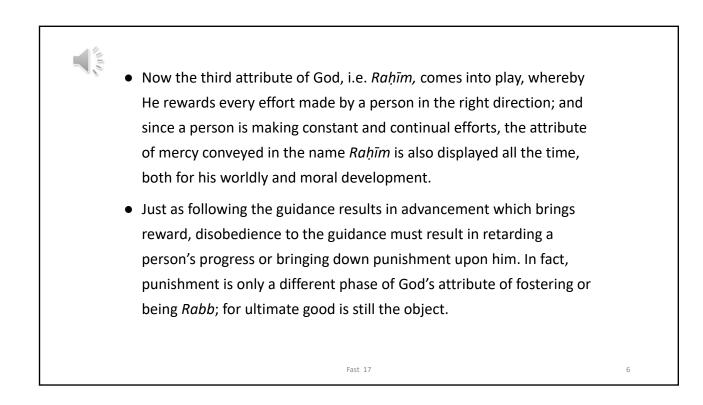
"The Beneficent, the Merciful, Master of the day of Recompense." -1: 2-3These three names in fact show how the attribute of *'bringing to perfection by fostering'* is brought into play.

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- Both *Raḥmān* and *Raḥīm* are derived from the same root, conveying the ideas of love and mercy.
- Raḥmān signifies that love is so predominant with Allah that He bestows His favours and shows His mercy even though a person has done nothing to deserve them. It is because of His unbounded love that He has granted humans the means of subsistence for physical life, and Divine revelation for spiritual growth.
- Then follows the stage in which a person takes advantage of these various means which help the development of physical and spiritual life, and turns them to his use.

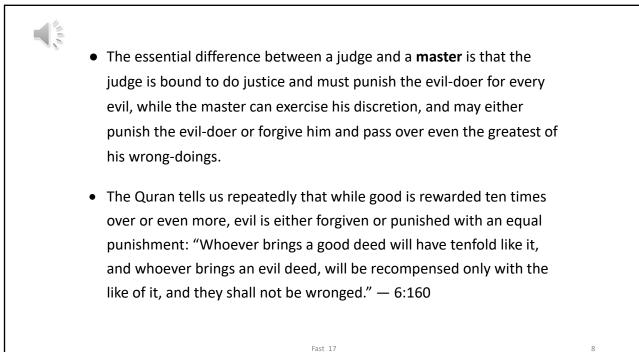






- Therefore, just as God needs to be Rahim so that He brings reward to one who does good, there must be another attribute of God to bring about the result of doing evil.
- Hence in the Opening chapter of the Quran, *Rahim* is followed by Māliki yaum al-dīn or "Master of the Day of Recompense". The use of the word Mālik, or Master, in connection with the requital of evil, is significant. Ordinarily it would be expected that there should be a judge to hand out the penalty for evil.







- Note that 'tenfold like it' is the **minimum** reward for good deeds, and 'the like of it' (meaning 'equal to it') is the **maximum** punishment for evil.
- In one place, the unbounded mercy of God is said to be so great that "He forgives sins altogether" (39:53). Hence the attribute *Mālik* links the idea of **punishment** with that of **forgiveness**. This is why, while the first chapter mentions the name *Mālik* as the next after *Raḥīm*, in the rest of the Quran it is the name <u>Gh</u>afūr (Forgiving) which occurs again and again with *Raḥīm*. More than sixty times Allah is described as *Ghafūr-un Raḥīm-un* (for example, 2:173, 3:89, 4:25, 5:3, 6:54, 7:153, 8:69, 9:5, 11:41, 12:53, etc.)

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