

MOTHER OF THE QURAN

TAFSIR OF SURAT AL-FATIHA

Virtues of Surat Al- Fatiha

- There is no chapter like Surat al-Fatiha in any other Divine Book

عَنْ أَبِي بِنِ كَعْبٍ قَالَ قَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَيْفَ تَقْرَأُ فِي الصَّلَاةِ قَالَ
فَقَرَأْتُ أُمَّ الْقُرْآنِ يَعْنِي سُورَةَ الْفَاتِحَةِ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ
مَا أُنْزِلَتْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَلَا فِي الْإِنْجِيلِ وَلَا فِي الزَّبُورِ وَلَا فِي الْفُرْقَانِ مِثْلَهَا وَإِنَّهَا سَبْعٌ مِنْ
الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ الَّذِي أُعْطِيَتْهُ

Ubayy ibn Ka'b reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said to him, "How do you recite in prayer?" Ubayy said, "I recite the foundation of the Book, Surat al-Fatihah." The Prophet said, "By the One in whose hand is my soul, nothing like it has been revealed in the Torah, nor the Gospel, nor the Psalms, nor the Furqan. Verily, they are the seven oft-repeated verses and the great Quran given to me."

(Tirmidhi)

Virtues of Surat Al- Fatiha

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ بَيْنَمَا جِبْرِيلُ قَاعِدٌ عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ سَمِعَ نَقِيضًا مِنْ
فَوْقِهِ فَرَفَعَ رَأْسَهُ فَقَالَ هَذَا بَابٌ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فُتِحَ الْيَوْمَ لَمْ يُفْتَحْ قَطُّ إِلَّا الْيَوْمَ فَنَزَلَ مِنْهُ مَلَكٌ
فَقَالَ هَذَا مَلَكٌ نَزَلَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ لَمْ يَنْزِلْ قَطُّ إِلَّا الْيَوْمَ فَسَلَّمَ وَقَالَ أَبَشِرْ بِنُورَيْنِ أُوتِيْتَهُمَا لَمْ
يُؤْتَهُمَا نَبِيٌّ قَبْلَكَ فَاتِحَةُ الْكِتَابِ يَعْنِي سُورَةَ الْفَاتِحَةِ وَخَوَاتِيمُ سُورَةِ الْبَقَرَةِ لَنْ تَقْرَأَ بِحَرْفٍ
مِنْهُمَا إِلَّا أُعْطِيْتَهُ

Ibn Abbas reported: While the Angel Gabriel was sitting with the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, he heard a creaking noise above him. Gabriel raised his head and he said, "This is a door of heaven that has been opened today and it has never been opened before today." Then an angel descended from it, and Gabriel said, "This angel descended to the earth today and he has never descended until today." The angel greeted him with peace and he said, "Rejoice in two lights you have been given, which were not given to any prophet before you: the opening of the Book, Surat al-Fatihah, and the last verses of Surat al-Baqarah. You will never recite a letter from them but that you will be given."

(Muslim)

Virtues of Surat Al- Fatiha

- Half of the Surah is for Allah SWT and the other half is for us
- Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet SAW said,
“Allah Almighty said: I have divided prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves, and My servant shall have what he has asked for. When the servant says, ‘All praise is due to Allah the Lord of the worlds,’ Allah says: My servant has praised Me. When he says, ‘The Gracious, the Merciful,’ Allah says: My servant has exalted Me. When he says, ‘The Master of the Day of Judgment,’ Allah says: My servant has glorified Me and my servant has submitted to Me. When he says, ‘You alone we worship, You alone we ask for help,’ Allah says: This is between Me and My servant, and My servant will have what he has asked for. When he says, ‘Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom you have favored, not those who went astray,’ Allah says: This is for My servant, and My servant will have what he has asked for.”
 (Muslim)

Names of the Surah

- Imam al-Suyuti lists more than 25 names of Surat al-Fatiha
- There are 4 main names of the Surah:
 - Al-Fatiha
 - Umm al-Kitab/Umm al-Quran
 - Sab' al-Mathani
 - Al-Shifa'

Names of the Surah: Al-Fatiha

- Why is it called Al-Fatiha?
 - Prayer is not complete without this surah. The Prophet SAW said, “There is no prayer without the Fatiha of the book.”
 - It is the first surah in the order of the Quran
 - It is the first entire surah that was revealed
 - It is the way out from a struggle. This is why fath in Arabic is called victory.

Names of the Surah: Umm al- Kitab

- Why is it called Umm al-Kitab?
 - Umm literally means basis or origin.
 - Surah Fatiha is the foundation of the entire Quran
 - It contains the main themes of the entire Qur'an – Tawheed, Risala, and Akhira
 - It speaks about the 3 pillars of worship of Allah – Love, Hope, and Fear

Names of the Surah: Sab' al- Mathani

- Why is it called Sab' al-Mathānī?
 - Allah SWT Himself calls this surah Sab' al-Mathani in Surat al-Hijr, ayah 87

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ

We have given you seven of the pairs, and the Grand Quran.

- The hadith of Abu Sa'eed al Mula (Ahmad)
- It refers to one of two things:
 - The 7 oft-repeated verses (recited at least 6 trillion times a year)
 - The 7 praised verses

Names of the Surah: Al-Shifa'

- Why is it called al-Shifā' ?
 - The prophet SAW said, “The opening of the book is a cure to every poison” (Tabrani)
 - Story of the Abu Sa'eed RA
 - Reciting Surah Fatiha 7 times is a source of cure

Isti'ādha

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

I seek protection with Allah from the cursed Shaytan

- Isti'ādha refers to turning to Allah SWT for spiritual protection.
- It is necessary before reading Quran
- أعَاذَ: to turn towards someone for protection.
 - أَعَاذَ إِلَى أُمِّهِ - He turned to his mother for protection
- الشَّيْطَانِ: Imam Sibaway says it comes from the word شَطَنَ, which means something far.
 - Shaytan is someone who has been moved away from the mercy of Allah SWT.
- الرَّجِيمِ: expelled, pelted, cursed
 - This is the pelting of Shaytan during Hajj is called Rajm.

Basmalah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful.

- There are 3 meanings of the Basmalah:
 - With the name of Allah SWT
 - With the Barakah of Allah SWT
 - With the help of Allah SWT (most accepted meaning)
- Imam Razi says that the entire summary of the Quran is in this verse
- The isti'ādha rejects evil and the basmalah affirms goodness.
 - Similarly, the Kalimah negates falsehood first and then affirms the truth
- In the time of Jahiliyyah, the mushrikeen would commence their worship with the names of their idols. Hence, Allah SWT brought the Basmalah at the beginning of the Quran
- The Prophet SAW said, "Any act which begins without the Bismillah is incomplete and flawed."

Ayah 1: Hamd

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

- Hamd v. Madh v. Shukr
- Allah uses the noun form as opposed to a verb to remove any limit of time
- The word al-Hamd is brought before the name of Allah for emphasis
 - For example: lunch is what I ate v. I ate lunch
- Allah SWT did not command us to praise Him
- The dua in Eid prayer is in the reverse sequence. This also takes place in the Quran. (Surah Jaathiyah)

Ayah 1: The Name of Allah

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

- Why did He use the name Allah instead of His other 99 names?
 - One generally introduces themselves with their name, not an attribute. Allah SWT is the greatest name.
 - The name Allah includes and comprises all other names of his.
- It is the first and last name of Allah SWT in the Quran.
- It is used in the Quran more than 3,500 times.
- Where does the name Allah come from?
 - From وَلَهُ which means to be astounded or lose one's mind in grief (Qurtubi). This is why a mother who lost her child is called "Muwalah"
 - From the root word لَهَا which means to raise up
 - From أَلَهُ which means to be worshipped (strongest opinion - Ibn Abbas RA, Ibn Faris RA)

Ayah 1: Rabb

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

- Imam Suyuti says there are more than 25 meanings of the word Rabb.
- In summary, there are 5 dominant meanings:
 - المالك: the owner
 - المربي: the one who takes care of His property
 - القَيِّم: the one who sustains His property
 - السَّيِّد: the one who has full authority
 - المُنْعِم: the one who gives gifts
- The first relationship mentioned between us and Allah SWT is that of a servant and master
- The difference between the slavery of the world and the slavery with Allah SWT.

Ayah 1: 'Alamīn

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

- عَوَالِمٌ v. عَالَمِينَ
 - عَالَمِينَ is the plural used for living beings, so it includes all generations, backgrounds, cultures, etc. of different people
 - Allah has created every culture, every race. So each and everyone is honored by Allah. This indicates that we together are all equal slaves of Allah.
- Allah SWT does not require helpers. Rather, he takes care of all creation on His own
- Story of Suliman AS

Ayah 2: Rahm

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

- The word رَحْمَ comprises the meanings of love, care, concern, and mercy
- The womb of the mother is called Al-rahm
- Al-Rahman contains 3 specific connotations:
 - It is extreme and beyond expectations
 - It is happening right now
 - It is temporary. All words on this pattern are temporary
- Al-Raheem contains 2 specific connotations:
 - It is permanent
 - Not necessarily happening right now

Ayah 2: Order

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

- Why did Allah SWT choose to use this order?
- Al-Rahman is the only name that comes alone other than the name Allah SWT.
- Al Rahman is mentioned 57 times in the Quran.
- Rahman is the only name an entire surah was named after (Surah al-Rahman)
- Al-Raheem is mentioned 114 times

Ayah 3

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

Master of the Day of Judgment.

- These two ayat show us the balance we need to have in our understanding of who Allah is. We have hope in His mercy and fear His punishment
- “Dīn” has two meanings:
 - Religion
 - Justice
- These 3 Ayah are a complete introduction of Allah SWT

Ayah 4: Worship

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

It is You we worship, and upon You we call for help.

- Ibn al-Qayyim wrote a 3-volume commentary on this ayah
- The pronoun إِيَّاكَ coming first gives the meaning of haṣr (limitation), meaning **only** you do we worship.
- The plural pronoun is used in the verbs because Allah SWT is demonstrating that there is benefit in doing good acts with others. We are a selfless ummah.
- After saying we worship Allah SWT, we come to the immediate conclusion we need His help for this

Ayah 4: Seeking Help

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

It is You we worship, and upon You we call for help.

- استعانة is when you are already making an effort and then you ask for help (like the stories of Taif, Badr, Hudaibiyah)
- What are we asking for help in?
 - We need help in everything. Like the one who is so desperate and just simply yells ‘Help’
 - Allah SWT already knows what we need help with.
- This is the middle Ayah that is broken into two parts: One part for Allah SWT and the other half for His slaves.

Ayah 5: Hidayah

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us to the straight path.

- Allah SWT has a set standard for His slaves and we need to ask Allah to make those standards clear for us
- Story of Bilal RA
- Why did Allah SWT specifically use the word Hidayah? There are 3 significant meanings of this word:
 - Guidance to go to the straight path
 - Guidance throughout the straight path, meaning do not leave me on this path
 - Guidance until the end of the journey
- In summary, asking for guidance really means 3 things: knowledge, guidance, and companionship

Ayah 5: Sirat

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
Guide us to the straight path.

- What is the Sirat? There are 5 valid opinions:
 - Book of Allah SWT
 - Islam (opinion of Ibn Abbas)
 - The religion of Allah SWT
 - The Prophet SAW and the Khulafa
 - The truth
- All of these opinions essentially give the same understanding
- The word Sirat has specifically refers to a road that is wide, long, straight, and dangerous

Ayah 5: Mustaqīm

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
Guide us to the straight path.

- The word مستقيم comes from the root word قَامَ, which means standing. This implies that the word مستقيم refers to straightness from north to south, as opposed to east to west
- Two points that we can derive from the word مستقيم:
 - The higher you go, the more dangerous it becomes
 - The higher you go, the better the view is (i.e. the better you understand Deen)
- The answer to this dua is already given to us and that is the rest of the Quran

Ayah 6

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

The path of those You have blessed,

- Who do we make our role models in this world?
- أَنْعَمْتَ comes from the word نُعُومَة which means easy and soft
- Allah refers to Himself when speaking about blessing people
- Who are these blessed people? Allah tells us in Surat al-Nisa, Ayah 69:

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ
وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا

Whoever obeys God and the Messenger—these are with those whom God has blessed—among the prophets, and the sincere, and the martyrs, and the upright. Excellent are those as companions.

Ayah 7

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Not of those against whom there is anger, nor of those who are misguided.

- **غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ** refers to the Jews who had knowledge, but disregarded the rules of their religion
 - Allah SWT does not refer to himself when mentioning anger
 - The word **مَغْضُوبٍ** is a noun, which is not restricted by time, meaning that those who continue with these actions will always incur the anger of Allah
- **الضَّالِّينَ** refers to the Christians who had no knowledge and remained ignorant
- Allah SWT breaks up the categories of the people of the world in this surah:
 - Those people that have the knowledge but no action
 - Those who have no knowledge, completely lost
 - Who used their knowledge to lead them to action