

Surah Al Fatihah

The Opening Chapter of the Qur'an.

A brief commentary

The divinely revealed book of Allah in Arabic, the Qur'an consists of 114 chapters. The first chapter is Al Fatihah and the last chapter is An-Naas.

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

The Beneficent, the Merciful.

Master of the Day of Judgment.

You (alone) we worship and from You (alone) we seek help.

Keep us on the Right Path.

The path of those upon whom You have bestowed Your bounties; not (the path) of those inflicted with Your wrath, nor (of those) gone astray.

(Translation by Aqa Mirza Mahdi Puya)

This Surah was revealed twice, once in Makkah and again in Madinah. There are many traditions regarding the importance of this Surah. This Surah contains the essence of the Qur'an and therefore it is called "*Ummul-Quran*." Or the "mother of the Qur'an." No Salaat is complete without reciting this Surah. It is also called "The Lord's prayer of the Qur'an." It is also called "*Fat-hatul-Kitab*" or the inaugurator of the book. There is a verse of the Quran about Surah Al Fatihah as below.

"We have certainly given you the seven oft-repeated (verses), and the glorious Qur'an." (Chapter 15, v 87)

The Arabic word used for seven oft-repeated is "*Saba-minal-mathani*."

The first verse of this Surah is "*Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*" followed by six verses.

No Salaat is complete without reciting the seven verses of this Surah, beginning with *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*.

The first three verses introduce us to the Mercy and Beneficence of Allah.

The fourth verse points out the power and majesty of Allah. He will be the only master on the day of resurrection, when all creation will be submitted to Allah and all power will belong to him alone.

The fifth verse, "Thee alone we worship and Thee alone we ask for help" reaffirms that Allah is the only deity that we worship and He is the only one we ask for help, and He only we look forward for acceptance of our Duas. Asking Allah directly is emphasized. Using Waseelah is sending salaam and blessings on the family of the Prophet (Peace be upon them).

The last three verses are Dua for guidance on the straight path (Islam), the path of the chosen of Allah. They are the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter, and 12 Imams from the progeny of Imam Ali and Hazrat Fatimah (Peace be upon them). Not to be misguided by non-purified and human designated Imams, not designated by Allah SWT.

Two different arrangements of the Qur'an.

1. The arrangement of the Qur'an in 114 Surah or chapters was done in the time of the third Caliph of Islam. This arrangement is not according to the chronological order of revelation of the scripture.
2. According to the Shia Muslim belief, Prophet Muhammad pbuh&p already had arranged the contents of the Qur'an SWT in 114 Chapters according to instructions by Allah and conveyed by archangel Jibraeel.
3. The thirty Para or *Juz* were arranged in the time of later Abbasi Caliphs, probably Al Hajjaj. The reason was to facilitate memorization of the *Quran*. The first *Para (Juz)* is named "*Alif-Laam-Meem.*" It is named after the first verse of the Surah Al- Baqarah. Surah Al Hamd is at the beginning of this Juz. The reason for it being kept separate by the scholars at the time of Abbasi Caliphs is presumably to show its distinction and importance.

According to a tradition attributed to the sixth holy Imam, Ja'far-as-Sadiq (AS) that when asked if the Qur'an that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) was the one with them (people), he answered "What is in between the two covers," meaning that the Qur'an that we have in Arabic is the complete Qur'an revealed to the Prophet (SAWS).

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