

Simple explanation of Soorah al-Faatihah

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Soorah al-Faatihah

Soorah al-Faatihah is the first Soorah of the Qur'aan and is recited in each prayer as the Prophet, may Allaah praise him, declared, "There is no Salaah (valid) without the opening chapter of the Book."¹ On accepting Islaam, a person should first memorise the Faatihah to be able to perform the prescribed prayers. Its meaning should be learnt and contemplated every time we offer Salaah.

Text, Transliteration, Translation, and Explanation

[بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ]

1. Bismillahir rahmaanir raheem

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.

The Qur'aan begins with the proper, unique, and personal name of God – Allaah. 'I begin with the name of Allaah' means a Muslim begins his recitation seeking the help of Allaah. Allaah is the God of mankind who alone deserves worship. No one else can take the name 'Allaah.' Allaah is the Most Gracious (ar-Rahmaan) Lord whose mercy extends to all creation. He is also the Bestower of Mercy (ar-Raheem) to the faithful.

[الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ]

2. Alhamdu lillahi rabbil Aalameen

(All) praise is (due) to Allaah, Lord of the worlds

Allaah deserves to be praised for the perfection of His qualities, material gifts, and spiritual blessings. Therefore, people should praise Him for everything He has given them. He alone deserves it. He is the Lord of the worlds, meaning He made everything that exists, maintaining it at every moment. He is the Lord who nourishes the believers with faith and good works.

[الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ]

3. Ar rahmaanir raheem

The Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy,

'Most Merciful' (ar-Rahmaan) and 'Merciful' (ar-Raheem) are two of the many names of Allaah.

¹ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim

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[مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ]

4. Maliki yawmid deen

Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.

Allaah alone is the Master of the Day of Judgment, the Day when human beings will be rewarded for their deeds. Reciting this verse in every rak'ah of payer constantly reminds a Muslim of the coming Judgment, and encourages him to do good and stay away from sins.

[إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ]

5. Iyyaka naabudu wa-iiyaka nasta-een

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

We only submit to You in worship and seek only Your help in everything we do. Everything is in Your hands. The verse tells us that a Muslim is not allowed to direct any act of worship, like prayer and asking for supernatural, help to anyone other than Allaah. The verse connects the heart with Allaah and purifies it of pride and the desire to show-off.

[اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ]

6. Ih dinas siratal mustaqeem

Guide us to the straight path

Guide us and show us the straight path and make it easy for us. Make us firm on it till we meet You. The 'Straight Path' is Islaam, the clear road leading to divine pleasure and Heaven shown by Muhammad, God's last and final prophet. A slave of Allaah cannot be happy and prosperous except by following it.

[صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ]

7. Siratal latheena an Amta Alayhim ghayril maghdoobi alayhim walad daalleen

The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour, not of those who have evoked (Your) anger or of those who are astray.

The path followed by those who were blessed – the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous. They are the guided. Do not let us follow the path of two. First, those who earned divine anger because they knew the truth but did not act on it, and that is the example of the Jews and whoever is like them. Second, do not let us follow the path of those who lost their way and were not guided, and that is the example of the Christians and their like. This is a prayer from a Muslim to purify his heart of stubbornness, ignorance, and misguidance. The verse also shows Islaam is God's greatest blessing. Those who know the way and walk on it are guided and, after the prophets they were, without doubt, the companions of Prophet Muhammad. It is recommended to say 'Ameen' after reciting Faatihah in the prayer. 'Ameen' means 'O Allaah, please accept.'