

Al-Fatiha

Al-Fātiḥah (Arabic: **الفاتحة**, IPA: [ʔal faːtiḥaḥ]; meaning: "The Opening" or "The Opener". George Sale translates simply as *The Preface*, or *Introduction*) is the first chapter (*surah*) of the Quran. Its seven verses (*āyah*) are a prayer for the guidance, lordship and mercy of God.^[1] This chapter has an essential role in Islamic prayer.

Quranic chapter titles are a human fabrication and are not considered by Muslims to be part of the divine revelation of the Quran.^[2] The primary literal meaning of the expression "al-Fātiḥah" is "The Opener," which could refer to this Surah being "the opener of the Book" (*Fātiḥat al-kitāb*), to its being the first chapter recited in full in every prayer cycle (*raka'ah*), or to the manner in which it serves as an opening for many functions in everyday Islamic life. Some Muslims interpret it as a reference to an implied ability of the Surah to open a person to faith in God.^[3]

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Classification	Meccan
Other names	The Key, The Opener
Position	Juz' 1
No. of verses	7
No. of words	29
No. of letters	139

A 14th- or 15th-century manuscript of the chapter

Summary

1-4 The names of God

5 The Muslims worshipping Allah alone.

6-7 We are begging Allah to guide us to the Straight Way

Opening of a Splendour Quran

Text and meaning

Text and Transliteration

- Hafs from Aasim ibn Abi al-Najud

^[4]بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

¹ *Bī-smi l-lāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm(i)*

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

² *al-ḥamdu li-l-lāhi rabbi l-‘ālamīn(a)*

اَلرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

³ *ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm(i)*

مُلِكْ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ٤

⁴ Māliki yawmi d-dīn(i)

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ٥

⁵ 'iyyāka na'budu wa-'iyyāka nasta'in(u)

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ٦

⁶ ihdinā ṣ-ṣirāṭa l-mustaqīm(a)

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ٧ لَا غَيْرَ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ٨

⁷ Ṣirāṭa l-laḏīna 'an'amta 'alayhim, ḡayri l-maḡḏūbi 'alayhim wa-lā ḏ-ḏāllīn(a)

Meaning

¹ In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

² All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinns and all that exists).

³ The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

⁴ The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day of Recompense (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)

⁵ You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).

⁶ Guide us to the Straight Way

⁷ The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray.

Translation: Noble Quran,^[5] 2020

Names

The name *al-Fātiḥah* ("the Opener") is due to the subject-matter of the surah. *Fātiḥah* is that which opens a birthday or a book or any other thing. In other words, a sort of preface or essence of the whole book.^[1]

The word **الفتاحه** came from the root word **فتح** which means to open, explain, disclose, keys of treasure etc. That means surah Al-Fatiha is the summary of the whole Quran. That is why it is generally recited with another Ayat or surah during prayers.^[6] That is, surah Al-Fatiha is paired with the rest of the whole Quran.

It is also called *Umm Al-Kitab* ("the Mother of the Book") and *Umm Al-Quran* ("the Mother of the Quran");^{[7][8][9]} *Sab'a al Mathani* ("Seven repeated [verses]", an appellation taken from verse 15:87 of the Quran);^[8] *Al-Hamd* ("praise"), because a hadith narrates Muhammad as having said that God says: "The prayer [al-Fātiḥah] is divided into two halves between Me and My servants. When the servant says, 'All praise is due to God', the Lord of existence, God says, 'My servant has praised Me'.";^[10] *Al-Shifa'* ("the Cure"), because a hadith narrates Muhammad as having said: "The Opening of the Book is a cure for every poison.";^{[11][12]} *Al-Ruqyah* ("remedy" or "spiritual cure").^[8] and al-Asas, "The Foundation", referring to its serving as a foundation for the entire Quran.^[13]

Background

According to Abdullah ibn Abbas and others, Al-Fatiha is a Meccan surah; while according to others it is a Medinan surah. The former view is more widely accepted, although some believe that it was revealed in both Mecca and Medina.^{[14][15]} In the Quran, the first revelations to Muhammad were only the first few verses (ayats) of Surah Al-Alaq, Al-Muzzammil, Al-Muddaththir etc. Most narrators recorded that al-Fātiḥah was the first complete Surah revealed to Muhammad.^[1]

Theme and subject matter

Al-Fatiha is often believed to be a synthesis of the Quran.^[16] It in itself is a prayer at the very beginning of the Quran, which acts as a preface of the Quran and implies that the book is for a person who is a seeker of truth—a reader who is asking a deity who is the only one worthy of all praise (and is the creator, owner, sustainer of the worlds etc.) to guide him to a straight path.^[1] It can be said to "encapsulate all of the metaphysical and eschatological realities of which human beings must remain conscious." ^[17]

Interpretations

"Al ḥamdu lillāhi rabbi l-'ālamīn" All the praises and thanks are for Allah who is the Lord of the universe. "Hamd **الْحَمْدُ**" 'the praise' is also the root of the name of the prophet Muhammad **مُحَمَّد** which means 'who is praised'.

"Ar raḥmāni r-raḥīm" **الرحمن** 'the Most Merciful' and **الرحيم** 'the Most Benevolent' all share the same root **رحم** which means 'the womb'. The womb is the place where nourishment and protection are provided for the fetus with abundance.^[18]

"Māliki yawmi d-dīn" **مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ** "The owner of the judgment day or dīn day. dīn **الدِّينِ** means religion and also carries a meaning of debt **لَدِّينِ**. Allah is the only judge that judges the dues of the people.

The Quran, chapter 1 (Al-Fatiha), verses 6–7:^[19]

Guide us to the straight path - The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.

—translated by Sahih International

Muslim commentators often believe past generations of [Jews](#) and [Christians](#) as an example of those evoking God's anger and those who went astray, respectively.^{[20][21][22][23][24][25][26]} Others view this as an exclusive condemnation of *all* Jews and Christians from all times.^{[27][28][29]} However, most Islamic scholars have interpreted these verses as referring exclusively not to a specific group of people but instead interpret these in the more general sense as, "evil consequences which man brings upon himself by wilfully rejecting God's guidance and acting contrary to His injunctions."^{[30][31][32][33][34][35]}

Related hadith

One hadith narrates a story of a companion of Muhammad who recited al-Fātiḥah as a remedy for a tribal chief who was poisoned. According to the hadith, Muhammad later asked the companion, "How did you know that it is a Ruqqayah [remedy]?"^[8] Muhammad al-Bukhari recorded in his collection:

Narrated [Abu Said Al-Khudri](#):

While we were on one of our journeys, we dismounted at a place where a slave girl came and said, "The chief of this tribe has been stung by a scorpion and our men are not present; is there anybody among you who can treat him (by reciting something)?" Then one of our men went along with her though we did not think that he knew any such treatment. But he treated the chief by reciting something, and the sick man recovered whereupon he gave him thirty sheep and gave us milk to drink (as a reward). When he returned, we asked our friend, "Did you know how to treat with the recitation of something?" He said, "No, but I treated him only with the recitation of the Mother of the Book [al-Fātiḥah]." We said, "Do not say anything (about it) till we reach or ask the Prophet. So when we reached Medina, we mentioned that to the Prophet (in order to know whether the sheep which we had taken were lawful to take or not). The Prophet said, "How did he come to know that it [al-Fātiḥah] could be used for treatment? Distribute your reward and assign for me one share thereof as well."

— Muhammad al-Bukhari, *Sahih al-Bukhari*^[36]

Similar versions are found in: Al-Bukhari: 007.071.645^[37]—medicine; Al-Bukhari: 007.071.633^[38]—medicine; Al-Bukhari: 007.071.632^[39]—medicine

[Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj](#) recorded that [Abu Hurairah](#) had told that [Muhammad](#) had said:

If anyone observes prayer in which he does not recite Umm al-Qur'an,^[40] it is deficient [he said this three times] and not complete.

— Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*^{[41][42]}

A similar story is found in Al-Bukhari: 001.012.723^[43]—characteristics of prayer.

Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj recorded:

[Ibn Abbas](#) reported that while [Gabriel](#) was sitting with the Apostle (may peace be upon him) he heard a creaking sound above him. He lifted his head and said: As a gate opened in heaven today which had never been opened before. Then when an angel descended through it, he said: This is an angel who came down to the earth who had-never come down before. He greeted and said: Rejoice in two lights given to you which have not been given to any prophet before you: Fatiha al-Kitab and the concluding verses of Surah al-Baqara. You will never recite a letter from them for which you will not be given (a reward).

— Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*^[44]

Benefits and virtues attributed to Sura Al-Fatiha

Some Suras are assigned special significance by adherents of Islam, because of their virtues and benefits (Arabic: فضائل faḍā'il) described in the Hadiths. Acceptance of the different hadith stories varies between Sunni and Shia Muslims and there is a variety of terms to classify the different levels of confirmed authenticity of a hadith.

Sunni benefits

One of the greatest Surahs

Ahmad ibn Hanbal recorded in his Musnad (Hadith collection) that Abu Sa'īd bin Al-Mu'alla had said:

"I was praying when the Prophet called me, so I did not answer him until I finished the prayer. I then went to him and he said, 'What prevented you from coming?' I said, 'O Messenger of God! I was praying.' He said, 'Didn't God say, "O you who believe! Answer God (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life."?' He then said, 'I will teach you the greatest Surah in the Qur'an before you leave the Masjid (Mosque).' He held my hand and when he was about to leave the Masjid, I said, 'O Messenger of God! You said: "I will teach you the greatest Surah in the Qur'an."' He said, 'Yes.' "Al-Hamdu lillahi Rabbil-'Alamin," It is the seven repeated (verses) and the Glorious Qur'an that I was given." (Al-Bukhari, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah also recorded this Hadith.)^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

Al-Fatiha used for cure

Al-Bukhari recorded in his collection:

Abu Sa 'id Al-Khudri said: "While we were on one of our journeys, we dismounted at a place where a slave girl came and said, "The chief of this tribe has been stung by a scorpion and our men are not present; is there anybody among you who can treat him (by reciting something)?" Then one of our men went along with her though we did not think that he knew any such treatment. But he treated the chief by reciting something, and the sick man recovered whereupon he gave him thirty sheep and gave us milk to drink (as a reward). When he returned, we asked our friend, "Did you know how to treat with the recitation of something?" He said, "No, but I treated him only with the recitation of the Mother of the Book (i.e., Al-Fatiha)." We said, "Do not say anything (about it) till we reach or ask the Prophet so when we reached Medina, we mentioned that to the Prophet (in order to know whether the sheep which we had taken were lawful to take or not). The Prophet said, "How did he come to know that it (Al-Fatiha) could be used for treatment? Distribute your reward and assign for me one share thereof as well." (Al-Bukhari 006.061.529 - Virtues of the Qur'an)^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

(Similar versions found in: Al-Bukhari: 007.071.645 - Medicine; Al-Bukhari: 007.071.633 - Medicine; Al-Bukhari: 007.071.632 - Medicine)

Necessity in Salat

Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj recorded that Abu Hurayrah had told that the Prophet had said:

"Whoever performs any prayer in which he did not read Umm Al-Qur'an (i.e., Al-Fatiha), then his prayer is incomplete." (Sahih Muslim)^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

(Similar story found in Al-Bukhari: 001.012.723 - Characteristics of Prayer)

1 of the 2 lights

Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj recorded that Ibn 'Abbas had said:

"While Hadrat Jibril (i.e. the angel Gabriel) was sitting with the Holy Prophet, he heard a sound above him and raised his head. He said: 'This is a door in the heaven which has been opened today and which has never been opened before today.' An angel descended from it. And he (Hadrat Jibril) said: 'This is an angel who has descended to earth, who has never descended before today.' He (that angel) gave the greetings of peace and said: 'Give the good news of two lights which you have been given; of which no Prophet before you was given: the Faatiha (Opening chapter) of the Book and the end of Surah al-Baqarah. You will not recite a letter of them without being given it.'" (Sahih Muslim)^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

"When you lay your side on your bed [getting ready to sleep] and you recite [The Opening chapter of The Book] and Sura al-Ikhlās, then you have been secured from everything, except death..." [Weak. Dhaif at-Targheeb w a tarheeb: 34]^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

"The Fatiha and the Ayaat ul Kursi: No slave will ever recite them in a house; except that no evil eye - from a Jinn or human – will ever affect them in that day..." [Dhaif al Jam i as-Sagheer : 3952 ; weak according to Scholar Albaanee][5] "The Fatiha is equal to a third of the Qur'an..." [Weak. Dhaif al Jam i as-Sagheer: 3949]^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

Shia benefits

One of the companions of Muhammad narrates that he once recited this surah in the presence of Muhammad, who said, "By Him in whose hand is my soul, a similar revelation to this has not been included in the Taurat (Torah), Injeel (Gospel), Zabur (Psalms) or even the Qur'an itself."^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

Muhammad once asked Jabir ibn Abdallah Ansari, "Should I teach you a surah that has no other comparison to it in the whole Qur'an?" Jabir replied, "Yes, and may my parents be ransom upon you O prophet of Allah." So Muhammad taught him surah al-Fatihah. Then Muhammad asked, "Jabir, should I tell you something about this surah?" Jabir answered, "Yes, and may my parents be ransom upon you O prophet of Allah." Muhammad said, "It (surah al-Fatihah) is a cure for every ailment except death."^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

Imam AbuAbdillah Ja'far as-Sadiq said that whoever cannot be cured by surah al-Fatihah, then there is no cure for that person. In the same narration it is written that if this surah is recited 70 times on any part of the body that is aching, the pain will surely go away. In fact, the power of this surah is so great that it is said that if one were to recite it 70 times over a dead body, you should not become surprised if that body starts moving (i.e. comes back to life). Surah al-Fatihah is a cure for physical and also spiritual ailments.^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

Iblees lamented on 4 occasions

Ambari in his "Kitaabur-Rad" through his own chain of narrators has mentioned from Mujahid ibn Jabr that Iblees, the accursed of Allah Ta'ala, lamented on four occasions: first when he was cursed; secondly when he was cast out of Heaven to the Earth; thirdly when Muhammad was given the Prophethood; fourthly when Surah Fatihah was revealed and it was revealed in Madinah.^{[45][46][47][48][49]}

See also

- [Basmala](#)
- [Juz'](#)
- [Shahada](#)

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25. "Surah Al-Fatihah, Chapter 1" (<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-1/surah-al-fatihah-chapter-1>). *al-islam.org*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20191208094137/https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-1/surah-al-fatihah-chapter-1>) from the original on 8 December 2019. Retrieved 11 December 2019. "Some of the commentators believe that / dallin / 'those gone astray' refers to the misguided of the Christians; and / maqdubi 'alayhim / 'those inflicted with His Wrath' refers to the misguided of the Jews."
26. al-Jalalayn. "The Tasfirs" (<https://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=1&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=1&tAyahNo=7&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=2>). *altafsir.com*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20190904084752/https://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=1&tTafsirNo=74&tSoraNo=1&tAyahNo=7&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=2>) from the original on 4 September 2019. Retrieved 7 February 2020.
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28. Bostom, Andrew (29 May 2019). "Ramadan Koran lesson: Curse Jews and Christians 17-times daily: Part 2" (<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/23949>). *Israel National News*. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20191209040013/http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/23949>) from the original on 9 December 2019. Retrieved 9 December 2019.
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30. Asad, Muhammad. *The Message of the Quran, Commentary on Surah Fatiha* (<http://www.muhammad-asad.com/Message-of-Quran.pdf>) (PDF). pp. 23–24. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20191126180926/http://www.muhammad-asad.com/Message-of-Quran.pdf>) from the original on 2019-11-26. Retrieved 2019-12-13. "According to almost all the commentators, God's 'condemnation' (ghadab, lit., 'wrath') is synonymous with the evil consequences which man brings upon himself by wilfully rejecting God's guidance and acting contrary to His injunctions. ... As regards the two categories of people following a wrong course, some of the greatest Islamic thinkers (e.g. Al-Ghazali or, in recent times, Muhammad 'Abduh) held the view that the people described as having incurred 'God's condemnation' - that is, having deprived themselves of His grace - are those who have become fully cognizant of God's message and, having understood it, have rejected it; while by 'those who go astray' are meant people whom the truth has either not reached at all, or to whom it has come in so garbled and corrupted a form as to make it difficult for them to recognize it as the truth (see 'Abduh in Manar I, 68 ff.)."
31. Shafi, Muhammad. *Ma'ariful Qur'an* (<http://www.islamicstudies.info/quran/maarif/maarif.php?sura=1>). pp. 78–79. Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200718160303/http://www.islamicstudies.info/quran/maarif/maarif.php?sura=1>) from the original on 2020-07-18. Retrieved 2019-12-13.
32. Ali, Abdullah Yusuf (2006). *The Meaning of The Noble Qur'an, Commentary on al-Fatiha* (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170312164616/http://www.ulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/English-Quran-With-Commentaries.pdf>) (PDF). p. 7. Archived from the original (<http://www.ulf.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/English-Quran-With-Commentaries.pdf>) (PDF) on 2017-03-12. "...those who are in the darkness of Wrath and those who stray? The first are those who deliberately break God's law; the second those who stray out of carelessness or negligence. Both are responsible for their own acts or omissions. In opposition to both are the people who are in the light of God's Grace: for His Grace not only protects them from active wrong ... but also from straying into paths of temptation or carelessness. The negative gair should be construed as applying not to the way, but as describing men protected from two dangers by God's Grace."
33. *Tafsir al-Kabir, al-Razi, التفسير الكبير, Tafsir Surah al-Fatiha*.
34. Al-Kashshaaf, Al-Zamakhshari, الكشاف, *Commentary on surah al-Fatiha*.
35. Maududi, Imam Sayyid Abul Ala. *Tafhim Al Quran* (<http://www.englishtafsir.com/Quran/1/index.html>). Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20130728184437/http://www.englishtafsir.com/Quran/1/index.html>) from the original on 2013-07-28. Retrieved 2013-06-17.
36. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 6:61:529 (<https://web.archive.org/web/19700101010101/http://cmje.usc.edu/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/061-sbt.php#006.061.529>)
37. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:71:645 (<https://web.archive.org/web/19700101010101/http://cmje.usc.edu/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/071-sbt.php#007.071.645>)
38. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:71:633 (<https://web.archive.org/web/19700101010101/http://cmje.usc.edu/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/071-sbt.php#007.071.633>)
39. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 7:71:632 (<https://web.archive.org/web/19700101010101/http://cmje.usc.edu/religious-texts/hadith/bukhari/071-sbt.php#007.071.632>)
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41. "The Meaning of Al-Fatihah and its Various Names" (<http://www.quran4u.com/Tafsir%20Ibn%20Kathir%2001%20Fatimah.htm>). Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170620224437/http://www.quran4u.com/Tafsir%20Ibn%20Kathir%2001%20Fatimah.htm>) from the original on 2017-06-20. Retrieved 2011-08-14.

- ## External links

- Retrieved from "<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Al-Fatiha&oldid=1022880211>"

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