

Simple Explanation of Surah Al-Fatiha

Description: The translation of *Surah al-Fatiha* supplemented with a simple verse by verse explanation.

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Category: Lessons > [The Holy Quran](#) > [Explanation of Selected Passages](#)

Objectives

- To learn the translation of *Surah al-Fatiha*
- To learn the verse by verse explanation of *Surah al-Fatiha* in simple language
- To study the explanation of verses based on *al-Tafseer al-Muyassar* written by a group of Quran scholars.

Arabic Terms

- *Surah* - chapter of the Quran.
- *Salah* - the Arabic word to denote a direct connection between the believer and Allah. More specifically, in Islam it refers to the formal five daily prayers and is the most important form of worship.

Surah Al-Fatiha

Surah al-Fatiha is the first *surah* of the Quran and is recited in each prayer as the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, declared, "**There is no *salah* (valid) without the opening chapter of the Book.**"^[1] **On accepting Islam, a person should first memorize *Surah al-Fatiha* to be able to perform the prescribed prayers. Its meaning should be learnt and contemplated every time we offer *salah*.**

Text, Transliteration, Translation, and Explanation

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

1. *Bismillahir rahmaanir raheem*

In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

The Quran begins with the proper, unique, and personal name of God - Allah. '*I begin with the name of Allah*' means a Muslim begins his recitation seeking the help of Allah. Allah is the God of mankind who alone deserves worship. No one else can take the name

'Allah.' Allah is the Most Gracious (*ar-Rahman*) Lord whose mercy extends to all creation. He is also especially Merciful (*ar-Raheem*) to the faithful.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

2. *Alhamdu lillahi rabbil Aalameen*

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

Allah 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.

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

3. *Ar rahmaanir raheem*

The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful,

'Most Gracious' (*Al-Rahman*) and 'Merciful' (*ar-Raheem*) are two of the many names of Allah.

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

4. *Maliki yawmid deen*

Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.

Allah 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 prayer 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-iybaka 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 Allah. The verse connects the heart with Allah 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 Islam, the clear road leading to divine pleasure and Heaven shown by Muhammad, God's last and final prophet. A slave of Allah 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 wal ad daalleen*

The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, 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 Islam 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 *Surah al-Fatiha* in the prayer. 'Ameen' means 'O Allah, please accept.'

Endnotes:

[1] *Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim*

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