

In Depth Explanation of Surah Al- Fatiha:

Insha'Allah, you will find the meaning and explanation from a different perspective and mind opening of what you have read or heard before.

- This is the first complete surah revealed on Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).
- Allah Himself told us in Quran about the importance and significance of this Surah. [We have given you the seven verses that are worthy of recitation over and over again (surah Al-Fatiha) and the glorious Quran.] Surah Al-Hijir, Ayah 87.
- Prophet (S.A.W) said the surah Al-Fatiha revealed to him has no parallel in all Allah's divine books (Bukhari).
- This surah is also called umm-al-Kitab (Mother of the book), foundation and essence of the Quran. Its recitation is mandatory in each Salah.
- This prayer is all for those who want to study the message of Allah. It is placed at the very beginning to teach the reader that if he sincerely wants to benefit from Al-Quran, he should offer this prayer to the Rabb of the universe. Al-Fatiha teaches that the best thing for a man is to pray for" *guidance towards the right path*" and to study Al-Quran with the mental attitude of a seeker of truth, and to recognize that the Rabb is the source of all knowledge. One should therefore, begin the study of Quran with a prayer to Allah for seeking His guidance.
- It is important to know that the real relation between Al-Fatiha and Al-Quran is not that of an introduction of a book but that of a prayer and its answer. Al-Fatiha is the prayer from the devotee, and the rest of the Quran is the answer from Allah. **The devotee prays to Allah to show him the "Right path" and Allah places the**

whole of Quran before him in answer to his prayer, as if to say:
“This is the guidance that you have asked for”

- This Surah consists of seven Ayahs (verses) and is distinctly divided in three parts. First part belongs exclusively to Allah Himself, second part is common between Allah (the master) and His Slave (us) and the last part exclusively belong to His slave.
- In a Hadith Qudsi, Prophet (S.A.W) said that Allah, the Glorious and Exalted, said, 'I have divided the prayer between Myself and my servant equally and My servant shall be granted what he asked for.' Therefore when the servant says, '**all praises and thanks are due to Allah, the Master of all nations;** Allah says, 'My servant has praised Me.' When he says, '**that He is extremely loving and caring right now and in the future;** Allah says, 'My servant has extolled Me.' When he says, '**Master of the Day of Judgement,**' Allah says, 'My servant has glorified Me.' When he says, '**It is only to you that we give ourselves totally and absolutely to slavery and worship and it is only you we ask help in the matters we are struggling with;** Allah says, 'this is between Me and My servant and My servant shall have what he requested.' When he says, '**guide us to the straight upward Path, the Path of those whom You have favoured, not of those who have received anger/rage, neither of those who are lost;**' Allah says, 'this is for My servant and My servant shall have what he asked for.'

Now the meaning and detail Tafseer and explanation of each seven ayahs:

Ayah 1

All praise and thanks belong to Allah, the Rabb of all the nations.

Explanation: All praise, thanks/gratitude is sincere, genuine and is absolutely ultimate. This praise and gratitude to Allah are totally independent of anybody praising or thanking Him or not. He is the

Rabb/Master means He is the owner, in charge, caretaker, maintainer (keeping alive and making sure everything exists) and giver of gifts to all nations (people of the world).

Ayah 2

Extremely loving and caring right now and loving and caring in the future.

Explanation: Ar-Rehman means extremely merciful, loving and caring right now, but is temporary (can be taken away). Ar- Raheem means He is Merciful, loving and caring permanently/ constantly, may not be necessarily happening now and not extreme. So Allah has both these qualities at the same time and thus it covers quality of being merciful from all angles. Allah's mercy is beyond human imagination. The multiple facet of the meaning of Ar-Rehman and Ar-Raheem, conveys the all-encompassing nature of our merciful creator, whose extreme love and care informs the minutest aspect of our existence. Ibne Abbas RA, describes the two qualities of Allah, Ar-Rehman is for this temporary world for everyone and Ar-Raheem for believers in the permanent hereafter world.

Ayah 3

King and the owner of the Day of Judgment.

Explanation: Allah alone is the Judge on that day and He controls the time on that Day. With His infinite justice and wisdom He will give reward and punishment to each individual based on their deeds they did in this world. Every soul will be held accountable and answerable on that day to His Master and will be presented to their Rabb individually. As we all know this world Allah created is not meant for total justice, it is impossible to have true justice in this life, imagine if somebody kills few people without any justifiable cause, the best possible justice in

this world will be to kill that person. But he will be killed once, say in retaliation of one person, but what about other persons he killed, he cannot be killed several times to compensate for other killings. Only Allah has the power to kill him once, bring life to him again and then kill him again so on and so forth. Even a person kill one person and his life is taken away as to give justice to the killed person, but who will compensate killers family, kids, spouse etc and the suffering they will have rest of their lives. So it is humanly impossible to do justice in this world. This attribute of Allah is appreciated by uncountable human beings who have been denied justice throughout the human race and will see their day of compensation on the Day of Judgment. As Allah controls the time on that Day, that is why in Quran it is mentioned that the Day of Judgment will be 50,000 years [Q70/4].

Note: the above first three Ayahs of Surah Al Fatiha are complete introduction of Allah by Himself. Based on first three ayahs that He is our Rabb, Ar-Rehman, Ar-Raheem and king/owner of the Day of Judgment, it has become abundantly clear the reason why we should praise and thank Him.

Ayah 4

It is only to You that we willingly give ourselves totally and absolutely to slavery and worship now and in the future and it is only You we ask help now and in the future in the matters we are struggling with.

Explanation: This Ayah is a declaration of slavery by us that we are giving up our freedom and independence to Allah as we are slave and He is our Master 24/7. In reality the real independence comes to us when we enslave ourselves to only Allah. Because in this world, many people are enslave to different things like our bodies, temptation, fashion, entertainment, culture, fake ideology, society pressures etc. The real independence comes when we do not care about anything else

except to please Allah. In this Ayah we ask for help, but we do not say what help? There are few reasons for that

- 1) Allah knows what we need help in.
- 2) List is too long.
- 3) We are desperate, so no time to list, just cries help.

And the best and most important help we are asking is to help us to become your slave. We cannot fulfill this huge obligation ourselves without your help.

Ayah 5

Guide us to the straight and upward path.

Explanation: As far as belief in Allah, His oneness and His praise and gratitude is concerned, a decent natured person will do that and will recognize that, because Allah has put in every human beings intellect called “Fitra”. Now when we already declared his slavery, the question is what we have to do as slave, we need instructions to follow His commandments. This instruction is called guidance in every aspect of our life. In Arabic guidance to right path includes, showing, telling, helping understand the straight path, it also includes that heart and mind is completely satisfied with this path. The greatest gift anybody can get from Allah is guidance. Guidance comes only from Allah alone, nobody even our beloved prophet has the ability to guide anybody; we can inspire people but absolutely cannot guide people. Allah gives guidance only to those who ask it again and again (like in every salah, even every Ruku we ask for guidance again and again, repeatedly day and night) and are willing and desirous of it. The simple question is why we ask something again and again, it obviously means we need that thing and we do not have it. Allah gives everything to human beings without asking (like life, food, security, you name it) but He never gives guidance automatically. This guidance is not permanent, it can be increased or decreased or even taken away by Allah in any instant. That is why we continuously ask Allah for guidance and even our beloved Prophet asks for guidance from Allah constantly. Any blessing of Allah

without guidance can be very harmful, for example if we have wealth without guidance, you see how people misuse this wealth to harm humanity, and similarly if we have health without guidance, we see how people misuse it. It is also very important to clearly understand the difference between knowledge and guidance. Gaining knowledge is absolutely desirable but it is not the goal, the goal is total guidance. We may have a lot of knowledge about Quran, fiqh etc but it is very possible we may not have guidance; we can retain the knowledge, but cannot retain guidance unless we ask for it. Even knowledge sometimes leads to arrogance, if we do not have guidance. Knowledge alone cannot guide us to the right path. We may be Muslims, but not necessarily guided. Abu Lahab and Abu Jahal knew Quran very well, that was revealed in their language and its explanation came to them none other than prophet himself, so they had knowledge but no guidance so what happened to them?

Although we need guidance from Allah on every aspect of our life, but there are 5 major conflict exists throughout the human race. We as humans with our intellect and all the resources and advancement of science cannot decide and resolve these conflicts without divine guidance. These are;

1. Relationship and rights between men and women.
2. Relationship and rights between capital and labor.
3. Relationship and rights between government and people.
4. Distribution of inheritance to the survivors.
5. Internal conflict between body and soul (Conscious and

temptations, greed and justice , spiritual need and physical needs
Every entity in the above subject matter will try to suppress others rights and take full favor to themselves if they have the power to do so. To resolve this conflict, so that everybody is provided their fair share of rights and nobody oppresses the other, we have no choice but to ask guidance with our Rabb, who not only created us and knows our strength, weaknesses and every body's need, but He is also wise and fair to His entire creation.

Ayah 6

The straight path of those, who you already made this path easy and showered them with your favors.

Explanation: After asking for guidance to the straight path, we need examples of people who Allah favored, remember this is past tense, so our role models are the ones who are gone not the present ones. In other words we are asking Allah's guidance for straight path in our present life but looking for past people. And those people are prophets, the sincere and steadfast affirmers of truth (Siddiqeen), the martyrs and the righteous (Salaheen). These people made efforts and Allah guided them to straight path (effort and result).

Ayah 7

Not the people who received anger and rage and also the ones who are lost.

Explanation: Allah is telling us that we do not want to be associated at all with these two groups of people. The first category of people Allah is so angry that He did not even want to mention His name alongside them, but just said they received anger, also means not only they receive anger and rage from Allah but also from other creation, because they misled other people too. These are the people who knowingly denied the truth. Second group of people are those who are lost, means they did not want to find the truth. Remember this is in a noun (timeless) sentence in Arabic, means these groups of people were there before and are still present. So we do not want to become any of those groups.

As a case study Prophet (SAW) describes these two groups of people as Jews and Christians. Jews knew the whole truth in their books about final testament (Quran) and final Messenger prophet Muhammad (SAW), but knowingly denied the truth. On the other hand Christians never tried to find the truth, although guidance came to them and just followed their whim about Allah and Jesus (PBUH). Prophet is talking about Jews and Christian's behavior that are mentioned in Quran. He is

not talking about persons or labeling people, but as a matter of fact anybody who knows and finds the truth and then reject it or anybody does not want to find the truth belongs to these categories. Here Allah closed the loophole of getting guidance, that if you know the truth and deny it, you are guilty. But you cannot be excused that you are lost, because if you do not know then learn to find the truth. No excuse of not knowing.

This Surah is a complete balance;

- 1) The Word "HAMD" balances between Allah's praise and gratitude.
- 2) Ar- Rahman and Ar-Raheem balances with Master of the Day of Judgment, so people cannot take advantage of His Mercy.
- 3) First three Ayahs are about Allah, 4th between us and Allah and last three about us, a perfect balance.
- 4) First three Ayahs are noun in Arabic grammar, means permanent. These describe Allah which is permanent. 4th Ayah is verb and noun, means temporary and permanent, it talks about both us and Allah, so we are temporary and Allah is permanent. The last three Ayahs describe about us, which are verb in Arabic grammar, which is temporary and we are temporary. A perfect balance in grammatical form.
- 5) First three Ayahs are about knowledge (Who is Allah?), 4th Ayah about action (declare our slavery and asking help to fulfill our commitment), 5th Ayah, we want to be people who were on straight path (they had both knowledge and action), 6th Ayah, we do not want to be those who received anger (they have knowledge, but no action) and the 7th Ayah, we also do not want to be those who are lost (action without knowledge). The whole surah is a perfect balance between knowledge and action.

- 6) First Surah in Quran is Surah Fatiha, the last Surah is Surah An-Nas,
- a) Surah Fatiha begins with positive, Praise to Allah, Last Surah begins with negative, refuge from Allah
 - b) First Surah we say Allah is Master of the nations, in last Surah we say Master of the people.
 - c) First Surah we say King of the Day of Judgment, last Surah we say King of people.
 - d) First Surah we say, we are ready to worship you (declare our faith, there is no God but Allah), last Surah we say Lord of the people.
 - e) First Surah we say keep us to the straight path and save from two groups of people, those who receive anger and are lost. In the last Surah we say save us from bad influence inside me from two groups, bad Jinns and people.
- A perfect balance and connection from beginning and end of Quran
- Subhan Allah who can reveal a Surah with perfect balance like this?

Conclusion

This Surah begins with the introduction of Allah. When we recognize Him, His power and attributes then we understood why we should praise and thank Him. Based on the above fact we declare our unconditional slavery to our Master. We then asked His guidance in every step of our life, asked Him to make us from those passed people who He showered His favors and not those who received anger and

rage and also who are lost. To reply to this asking of guidance, Allah said here is My instruction (The Quran).

It is not coincidence that the first words from Quran right after this Surah are (ALIF-LAM MEEM, This is the book in which there is no doubt. (Since its author, Allah, the creator of the universe, possesses complete and perfect knowledge, there is no room for doubt about its contents.) It is guidance for the God conscious (who not only ask for guidance but are also desirous of it.)

It is also to be noted that Allah taught us a beautiful prayer “Say, our Rabb, let our heart not deviate after You have guided us and grant us from Yourself mercy. Indeed You are the grantor of bounties without measure. [Al-Imran, Ayah 8]. This also tells us that one should not be content that he got guidance, keep asking and working for guidance throughout your life.

Note: As we ask Allah for guidance again and again, but remember there can be no guidance for three kinds of people.

- 1) Who are not grateful to Allah
- 2) Who are not willing to accept slavery to Allah.
- 3) Who do not have sense of justice (Selfish).

Allah in Quran talks little about knowledge, but a lot about thinking. Knowledge without thinking and pondering is no use. For example we all know and believe in the Day of Judgment or we are slave of Allah, but do we think what it means to be slave of Allah 24/7 or what kind of accountability we have to give to Allah on the Day of Judgment? Without this thinking our lives will not change.

May Allah give us the ability to understand this Surah and ask for His guidance all the time. Ameen!