

## The Mother of the Quran

In the Name of Allah, the Most Kind, the Most Merciful.

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds

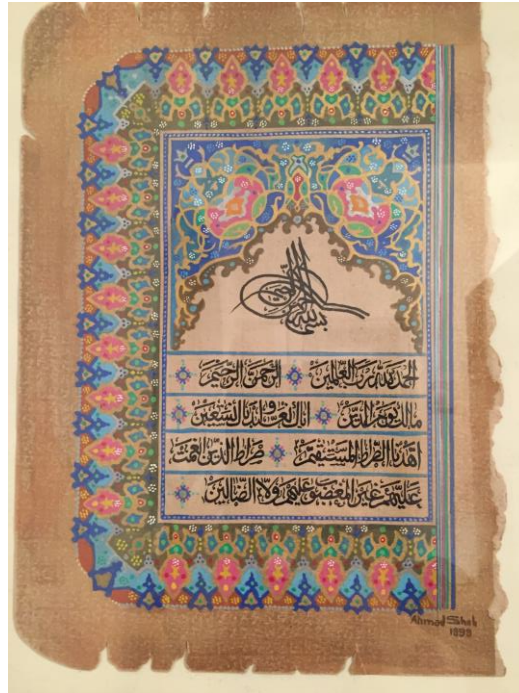
The All Merciful, the Very-Merciful

The Master of the Day of Judgement.

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

Guide us in the straight path—

The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.



### Surah Al Fatihah – More than just an introduction. The essence of the Quran.

The opening of any book isn't just an indication of what is to come, but of a superior quality and reflects the energy of its author. So densely packed are these seven short verses, that they are known as *Al Wafiyah* (The Sufficient). It is as if we were given the entire Quran in one hand and Surah Al Fatihah in the other, making it on a par with the entire Quran, reflecting its essence, rank and grandeur.

'He has mentioned: "And We have bestowed upon thee the Seven Oft-repeated (verses) and the Grand Quran"' (15:87)

Opening the first page of the Quran, Allah Almighty begins the process of teaching us how to talk to Him. Imam Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him) counselled: 'Whoever wishes to have a dialogue with Allah Almighty, let him recite the Quran.'

**Surah Al Fatihah is a prayer in Allah Almighty's own words, teaching us how to appeal to Him and giving us the guidance to ask for guidance.**

Scholars writing *tafseers* (critical analysis) of the Quran have devoted pages and pages on these seven ayahs including Sheikh Nuruddin Itr (may Allah be pleased with him), for example, who wrote a 400 page commentary on them in his first draft.

It is no wonder that we have been commanded to recite Surah Al Fatihah in our *salah* at least seventeen times a day. It is incomparable in its style – a most perfect, concise and eloquent introduction to the Divine Message. And reciting it with presence of mind brings tranquillity to the heart.

### **What's in a name?**

In Arabic culture, something important has many names. And Surah Al Fatihah is a great example of this. Imam As Suyuti (may Allah be pleased with him) collected twenty names for this blessed *surah*, several of which are *tawfiqi* (from Allah Himself). Each name signifies one of its multiple functions. Referred to as *Umm ul Kitab* (Mother of the Book) by the Prophet (peace and blessings upon him), as well as *Al Asaas* (The Essence), it is simultaneously the introduction to and essence of the entire Quran.

Some of its functions and benefits include:

- **Prayer (*As Salah*)** – It is the essential ingredient in our *salah*, the secret of our connection with Allah Almighty, the means of acceptance of our supplications. Commonly recited in parts of Syria and Lebanon at the end of *dua* to increase the acceptance of *dua*.
- **Praise (*Al Hamd*)** – This *surah* contains tremendous praise and gratitude within just a few concise words. It defines our relationship with Allah Almighty and our total indebtedness to Him.
- **Cure (*Ash Shifa*)** – When you truly believe the Quran will cure you then it will. Reciting Allah Almighty's verses slowly, with deep faith has potent healing power, beyond our imagination.
- **Protection (*Al Waqiyah*)** – Reciting and then blowing over someone or something, or wiping part of someone can provide protection against common physical ailments and protection from '*ayn* (evil eye)/ *sihr* (black magic)/ *hasad* (envy). This comprises the recitation of Surah Al Fatihah, the last two verses of Surah Al Baqarah, Ayat ul Kursi, Surah Al Ikhlas and the Mu'awiddhatayn (Surah Al Falaq and Surah An Nas) seven times each, slowly and with purity of intention. The person performing *ruqyah* should place their hand on the one who is suffering, ideally on their head. This should be concluded with the following supplication: '*Allahumma Rabban naas addhi bil ba's. Washfi, anta Shafi. La shif'a illa shifa'uk, shifa'an la yughadiru saqama.*' (Translated as: 'O Allah, Lord of mankind, remove the harm and heal him, for You are the Healer and there is no healing except Your healing, with a healing which does not leave any disease behind.')

According to the majority of the scholars, Surah Al Fatihah, The Opening, was not the first surah to be revealed – that was the beginning ayahs of Surah Alaq, however, Allah Almighty chose, Surah Al Fatihah as the most perfect beginning to Allah his book.

It is narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings on him) said: "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, Allah has not sent down a similar *surah* to this *surah* (Al Fatihah), neither in the Torah, nor in the Gospel, nor in the Psalms, nor even in the Quran and it is *Umm-ul-Kitab*."