

Introduction to Surah Fatihah:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Period of Revelation

It is one of the very earliest Revelations. In fact, we learn from authentic Traditions that it was the first complete Surah revealed to the Prophet (pbuh). Before this, only a few miscellaneous verses were revealed which form parts of Surah Alaq, Muzzammil and Muddaththir.

Major Issues, Divine Law, and Guidance

- This Surah is known as Sab'a Mathani (Seven Oft-Repeated Verses).
- It is also called Umm-ul-Kitab (Mother of the Book), foundation and essence of the Qur'an.
- It is a mandatory part of each Islamic Prayer (Salah), recited at least seventeen times daily in the five obligatory prayers.
- This Prayer is taught by Allah (Almighty God) Himself to mankind, as a Favor, to let mankind know the format of Prayer which is acceptable to Him.

Theme

This Prayer is for all those who want to study His 'Allah's' Message and seek guidance and mercy. It is placed at the very beginning to teach the reader that if he sincerely wants to benefit from the Qur'an, he should offer this prayer (worship) to the Rabb of the Universe. Al-Fatiha teaches that the best thing for a man is to pray for "Guidance towards the Right Way" and to study the Qur'an with the mental attitude of a seeker of truth, and to recognize that the Rabb of the Universe is the source of all knowledge. They should, therefore, begin the study of Al-Qur'an with a prayer to Allah for Guidance.

It is important to know that the relation between Al-Fatiha and the Qur'an is that of an introduction to this book and that of a prayer and its answer. Allah also introduces himself by using his attributes such as Al-Hamd, Rab, Rahman and Rahim. Al-Fatiha is the prayer from the devotee and the rest of the Qur'an is the answer from Allah. The devotee prays to Allah to show him the "Right Way" and Allah places the whole of the Qur'an before him in answer to his prayer, as if to say: "This is the Guidance that you have asked for".

This Surah is called Al-Fatihah, that is, the *Opener* of the book (The Opening), the surah with which the prayer/Salah/Namaz is begun.

Surah Fatihah has many names, its known as Umm Al-Kitab (the mother of the book) because the Quran starts with it and because the prayer is started by reciting it, and it was also said that it is

Umm Al-Kitab because it contains the meanings of the entire Quran **(It's the summary of the Quran)** (Sahih Bukhari).

Another name of Fatihah is Saba' al-Masani or "The 7 oft-repeated verses" it's because we are supposed to recite it in every Rakah of every Salah. Without it, our Salahs are not valid.

It is also called Al-Hamd and As-Salah because reciting it is a condition for the Salah/prayer to be correct, furthermore in the first part of Surah Fatihah Allah's 'Hamd' (praise) is mentioned.

Al-Fatihah was also called Ar-Ruqyah (remedy) and Ash-Shifa (the cure).

In a hadith of Imam Ahmads Musnad he narrates PbuH saying:

"I will teach you a Surah which is the greatest Surah in the Quran before you leave the masjid. " This is 'Alhamdulillah Rabbil Aalamin, it is the seven repeated verses (Hadith Ahmad)

Also:

"Would you like me to teach you a surah the likes of which nothing has been revealed in the Tawrah, the Injil or the Zabur (psalms of David), 'It is Alhamdulillah Rabbil Aalamin.' (Hadith Bukhari)

And:

One of them (the Prophet's companions) started reciting Surat-al-Fatiha and gathering his saliva and spitting it (at the snakebite). The patient got cured. (Hadith Bukhari) – Related to Ruqya and shifa.

Abu Hurayrah says regarding Surah Fatihah, he heard the PbuH say:

(Allah, the Exalted, said, 'I have divided the prayer (Al-Fatihah) into two halves between Myself and My servant, and My servant shall have what he asks for.' If he says:

(1. In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.)

(2. All praise and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of existence.) Allah says, 'My servant has praised Me.' When the servant says,

(3. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.) Allah says, 'My servant has glorified Me.' When he says,

(4. The Owner of the Day of Recompense.) Allah says, 'My servant has glorified Me,' or 'My servant has related all matters to Me.' When he says,

(5. You (alone) we worship, and You (alone) we ask for help.) Allah says, 'This is between Me and My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he sought.' When he says,

(6. Guide us to the straight path.)

(7. The way of those on whom You have granted Your grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray), Allah says, 'This is for My servant, and My servant shall acquire what he asked for.'."

This Surah starts with 'Alhamdulillah' and there is a total of 5 Surahs (including Al-Fatihah) that start with Alhamdulillah, these are:

- 1) Surah Al-Fatihah
- 2) Surah Al-An 'Aam
- 3) Surah Al-Kahf
- 4) Surah Al- Saba
- 5) Suarh Al-Fatir

Subject matter of Surah Fatiha

This Surah briefly explains the Maqasid Arba'ah Aliya (All the 8 principles of the Holy Quran are explained). Which are: Tawheed, Risaalah, Sadakat Al kitab, Iman Bil Aakhira, Infaaq, Jihad, Tanzeem, and Aadaab.

As well as this is the main theme is 'Eyaka na'budu Wa Eyaka nastaeen' (we only worship you Allah alone and we only ask you alone for help.

In the introduction to Tafsir, we mentioned that the Quran is divided into 4 sections or parts each of which begins with the words "Alhamdulillah" (All praises are for Allah)''.

The first section begins here in Surah Fatiha and ends with the completion of Surah Ma'idah; This part mainly discusses the concept of Allah being the Sole and Only Creator of everything, thus Allah creates everything from nothing (0) to infinity/endless. (Notice that this section starts with "Alhamdulillah" in Surah Fatihah.)

NUZUL (Order)

Order of revelation: This is a Makkan surah consisting of 7 Verses, its 5th in order of revelation coming after surah Muddaththir but 1st in order of the book (Quran) as the PbuH placed it. As well as this most narrators recorded that Al-Fatihah was the first complete Surah revealed to Muhammad PbuH.

RABAT (Connection)

The Surah has no rabat or connection to previous surahs as it's the first surah and is the reason why it's known as the Introduction/Opener/Summary/Mother of the Holy Quran. But it is connected to each and every surah coming after it, thus it being the introduction of the Quran. The concepts discussed in this surah are relayed in some way or form throughout all of this glorious book, the Holy Quran.

MUMTAZ (Importance/Excellence)

The Mumtaz or importance and Excellence of this surah are many such as It explains the 4 sections of the Quran (as discussed previously), teaches Tawheed and Attributes of Allah, teaches us how to make Worship (ibadah) and Duah, and also this surah is recited in our Salah and without reciting this Surah our salah is incomplete.

MAQSAD (Purpose)

The purpose of the Surah is 'Eyaka na'budu Wa Eyaka nastaeen' (we only worship you Allah alone and we only ask you alone for help (the same was said by the Ibn Kathir).

KHULASA (Summary/Division)

The summary or main points of the Surah are:

(1) Surah Fatihah explains the Maqasid Arba'ah Aliya (All the 8 principles of Quran) (as discussed previously).

(2) The Surah is divided into 3 sections:

Section (1)

Is from Verses 1-3 (Not having Bismaillah as Verse 1); 'Alhamdulillah to Malik Youmideen' (Allah's attributes): which explains the 4 sections of the Quran and concentrates on Tawheed (Allah is one in all his Attributes).

Section (2)

Is Verse 4: 'Eyaka na'budu Wa Eyaka nastaeen' (We worship you and ask you for help); which explains the relationship between Allah and Man. How to worship him and ask him for help and thus he will guide you and help you to be firm on the 'Sirat Al Mustaqeem.' (Verse 5 'Ehdina Sirat al Mustakim')

Section (3)

Is Verse 6: 'Sirat Allahdhina to Waladhaalin' (The path of the righteous the ones you have blessed, not those who earned your anger, nor those who went astray); which discusses or introduces the 3 groups of people and therefore we ask Allah to put us or guide us to the path of 'Anamta Alayhim' and not the path of 'Maghdub and Waladhaalin'.

Tafsir of Auzubillahi Minashaitan Nirrajim **Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim:**

This in Arabic is called 'Isti'adhah' Seeking refuge with Allah before reciting the Quran, Allah says:

When you recite the Quran, seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed.
(S16, V98)

The meaning of Isti'adhah:

"I seek refuge with Allah from the cursed Satan so that he is prevented from affecting my religious or worldly affairs or hindering me from adhering to what I was commanded or luring me into what I was prohibited from." Indeed, only Allah is able to prevent the evil of Satan from touching the son of Adam.

In the Arabic language, Shaytan is derived from Shatana, which means the far thing. Hence, the Shaytan has a different nature than mankind, and his sinful ways are far away from every type of righteousness. It was also said that Shaytan is derived from Shata, (literally 'burned'), because it was created from fire. Some scholars said that both meanings are correct, although they state that the first meaning is more plausible. As Allah says:

So, when you want to recite the Qur'an, seek refuge with Allah from Shaytan, the outcast (the cursed one). Verily, he has no power over those who believe and put their trust only in their Lord (Allah). His power is only over those who obey and follow him (Satan), and those who join partners with Him.) (S.16, V.98-100).

(O Children of Adam! Let not Shaytan deceive you, as he got your parents Adam and Hawwa' (Eve) out of Paradise) (S.7 V,27),

(Surely, Shaytan is an enemy to you, so take (treat) him as an enemy. He only invites his Hizb (followers) that they may become the dwellers of the blazing Fire) (S,35 V,6) and,

The meaning of Ar-Rajm:

Ar-Rajim means, being expelled from all types of righteousness. It was also said that Rajim means, the person who throws or bombards things, because the devil throws doubts and evil thoughts in people's hearts. The first meaning is more popular and accurate.

Allah says:

(And indeed, We have adorned the nearest heaven with lamps, and We have made such lamps Rujuman (as missiles) to drive away the Shayatin (devils)) (S.67:5).

Allah also said:

(Verily, We have adorned the near heaven with the stars (for beauty). And to guard against every rebellious devil. They cannot listen to the higher group (angels) for they are pelted from every side. Outcast, and theirs is a constant (or painful) torment. Except such as snatch away something by stealing, and they are pursued by a flaming fire of piercing brightness) (37:6-10).

Further, Allah said:

(And indeed, We have put the big stars in the heaven and We beautified it for the beholders. And We have guarded it (near heaven) from every Shaytan Rajim (outcast Shaytan). Except him (devil) who steals the hearing then he is pursued by a clear flaming fire.) (15:16-18).

The meaning of Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim:

The literal meaning of this is: 'In the name of Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful'.

The 'Ba' in Bismillah is a proposition like in English we have; in/on/at (in Arabic it's for joining/help)

The 'lsm' in Bismillah means a name (referring to), which in this case is 'Allah'.

Anything stated without 'Bismillah' is incomplete since you haven't remembered Allah before doing it. Reciting Bismillah is recommended before starting any action or deed. Narrated by Abu Hurairah, PbuH said:

"There is no valid ablution (wudu) for he who did not mention Allah's Name in it"
(Ahmad 3, 41)

"Say Bismillah, eat with your right hand and eat from whatever is closest to you"
(Muslim 3, 1600)

Moreover, the first revelation to the PbuH in the cave of Hira also included Bismillah, when Allah says 'Ikra Bismirabbika':

Read, 'O Prophet, ' in the Name of your Lord Who created— (S.96, V1)

We begin all our actions in the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Benevolent, to remember that everything is for His sake. We begin in Allah's name in the hope that we will be successful, rewarded and blessed.

Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim states 3 Attributes of Allah which are: Allah, Rahman and Rahim, Allah is the term used for God/Lord the exalted, it is said that Allah is the greatest Name of Allah because it is referred to when describing Allah by his various attributes, Allah says:

He is Allah, beside Whom La ilaha illa Huwa (none has the right to be worshipped but He) the Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. He is Allah, beside Whom La ilaha illa Huwa, the King, the Holy, the One free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the Almighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah! (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the Almighty, the Wise) (S.59, V22-24)

Also, the Two Sahih's recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said:

Allah has ninety-nine Names, one hundred minus one, whoever counts (and preserves) them, will enter Paradise.

Rahman & Rahim are exaggerated forms of 'Rahma' (mercy). **Rahman** meaning 'Most gracious' (general grace to all of mankind) and **Rahim** meaning 'Most Merciful' (specific mercy for the Muslims/believers). Al-Qurtubi said, "It was said that both Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim have the same meaning, such as the words Nadman and Nadim, as Abu 'Ubayd has stated. Abu 'Ali Al-Farisi said, 'Ar-Rahman, which is exclusively for Allah, is a name that encompasses every type of mercy that Allah has. Ar-Rahim is what effects the believers, for Allah said:

And He is ever Rahim (merciful) to the believers.)' (S.33, V43) Also, Ibn 'Abbas said - about Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim, 'They are two soft names, one of them is softer than the other (meaning it carries more implications of mercy).

Also, Allah mentioned the Istawa - rising over the Throne - along with His Name Ar-Rahman, to indicate that His mercy encompasses all of His creation. Allah also said:

Ar-Rahman (Allah) rose over (Istawa) the (Mighty) Throne (in a manner that suits His majesty. (S.20, V5)

There are 19 letters in Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim, any letter one reads of the Quran he gets 10 rewards, therefore by getting in a habit of saying this before doing anything you will get 190 rewards (rewards for uttering such a few words but will be heavy/accumulate on the scales on the day of judgement). Similarly, there are 19 letters in Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim and there are 19 Angels/guardians guarding the hellfire. Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud says:

"Whoever reads and understands the importance of Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim it will protect him from the 19 gates and Angels of the Hellfire".

Also, Allah says regarding the Hellfire:

*And what will make you realize what Hell is? It does not let anyone live or die, scorching the skin. **It is overseen by nineteen 'keepers'.** We have appointed only 'stern' angels as wardens of the Fire. **And We have made their number only as a test for the disbelievers,** so that the People of the Book will be certain, and the believers will increase in faith, and neither the People of the Book nor the*

believers will have any doubts, and so that those ‘hypocrites’ with sickness in their hearts and the disbelievers will argue, “What does Allah mean by such a number?” In this way Allah leaves whoever He wills to stray and guides whoever He wills. And none knows the forces of your Lord except Him. And this description of Hell is only a reminder to humanity. (S. 74, V. 27-31)

So, from this we can see that those who believe in Allah and the last day will be protected from these 19 Angels of the Hellfire. Moreover, when we use the letter ‘Ba’ in Bismillah, we need to use both lips to pronounce it, meaning we bring both lips close together and join them (otherwise you cannot pronounce it- ‘Try it’). Similarly, you must join yourself/bring yourself close with Allah and his word (this Quran), like the joining of lips to say ‘Ba’ in Bismillah. The ‘Ba’ represents joining oneself with Allah and then Allah will help and protect you.

Bismillah was used as a ‘separator’ for each Surah or subject matter so the reader can identify/follow the book properly, and thus can distinguish when a Surah/subject matter finishes and when the next one starts. In the Quran every Surah starts with Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim except for Surah Tauba (9) as the PbuH didn’t read it there. This maybe because the previous Surah (Surah Anfal) and surah Tauba have the same subject matter (so it’s a continuation), Allah knows best. As well as this, Surah Naml (27) verse 30 is the only Ayat in the Quran which has Bismillah Hirrahman Nirrahim in it and not only in the start.

Tafsir of Surah Fatihah:

Alhamdulillah – All praise and thanks be to Allah. (First section of Surah Fatihah from Alhamdulillah to Malik Youmidin)

Al Hamd – (Al meaning ‘The’ or ‘specifying’). – The specific praise or **All Praise** worthy or due for Allah (only praise Allah with worthy praise or befitting praise). Allah doesn’t need this praise as Allah was praised even before creating the universe and even after he wraps it up, (he doesn’t need our praise) as he was praised when we were not here (before birth) and when we will not be here any longer (when we die). Further, Ibn Jarir commented on the Ayah:

(Al-Hamdu Lillah), that it means, "A praise that Allah praised Himself with, indicating to His servants that they too should praise Him.

Lillah – For Allah (All praises are for Allah)

‘Hamd’ in Alhamdulillah - (all praise and thanks be to Allah) is: All Praise and thanks are due purely to Allah, alone, not any of the objects that are being worshipped instead of Him, nor any of His

creation. These thanks are due to Allah's innumerable favours and bounties, that only He knows the amount of. Allah's bounties include creating the tools that help the creation worship Him, the physical bodies with which they are able to implement His commands, the sustenance that He provides them in this life without anything or anyone compelling Him to do so. All thanks and praise are due to Allah for these favours from beginning to end." Ibn Jarir also commented on the Ayah saying:

(All praise and thanks be to Allah), entails praising Allah by mentioning His most beautiful Names and most honourable Attributes. When one proclaims, 'All thanks are due to Allah,' he will be thanking Him for His favours and bounties."

So, therefore the word 'Alhamdulillah' is an introduction Allah is Giving for Himself by using the word Allah (his name). Allah is Introducing himself to the reader of the book (Quran), saying that I am Allah and All praises are due to me. Following on from this he explains why all the praises are due to him when he says 'Rabbil Aalamin' (I am the sustainer/provider of all the world's), 'Ar Rahman Nirrahim' (I'm the most gracious most merciful). Like when a person introduces himself, he says, 'I'm so and so' and says his name and then all his other attributes and details (I do this/my job is this). Similarly, Allah is saying 'All praise is for me as I am Allah', then goes on to saying I'm Rabbil Aalamin, I'm Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim, I'm 'Malik Youmidin'.

At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah recorded that the Messenger of Allah said:

The best Dhikr (remembering Allah) is La ilaha Illallah and the best supplication is Al-Hamdu Lillah. Verily, your Lord likes Al-Hamd.

Abu Hurairah (RA) narrated: The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said, "There are two statements that are light for the tongue to remember, heavy in the Scales and are dear to the Merciful:

Subhan-Allahi wa bihamdihi, Subhan-Allah-il-Azim (Glory be to Allah and His is the praise, (and) Allah, the Greatest is free from imperfection) (Bukhari).

Rabbil Aalamin – The Provider and Sustainer of All the worlds.

Rabb – Ar-Rabb is the **owner/provider/sustainer/nourisher**; - who has full authority over his subjects and provides them in the way that suits him. Ar-Rabb, linguistically means, the master or the one who has the authority to lead. All these meanings are correct for Allah. Allah says:

If you ask them 'O Prophet' who created the heavens and the earth and subjected the sun and the moon 'for your benefit', they will certainly say, "Allah!" How can they then be deluded 'from the truth'? (S,29, V,61)

Allah gives abundant or limited provisions to whoever He wills of His servants. Surely Allah has "full" knowledge of everything. (S,29, V,62)

And if you ask them who sends down rain from the sky, giving life to the earth after its death, they will surely say, "Allah!" Say, "Praise be to Allah!" In fact, most of them do not understand. (S,29, V,63)

Aalamin – Al-`Aalamin is plural for **`Aalam'**, which encompasses everything in existence except Allah. The word **`Aalam'** is itself a plural word, having no singular form. The **`Aalamin** are different creations that exist in the heavens and the earth, on land and at sea. Every generation of creation is called an **`Aalam'**.

(The Lord of the **`Alamin**), "Every type of creation is an **`Aalam'** even down to the bacterial system in your body is an **`Aalam'** itself, the cells in your skin is an **`Aalam'**." Az-Zajjaj also said, "Aalam encompasses everything that Allah created, in this life and in the Hereafter." Al-Qurtubi commented, "This is the correct meaning, that the **`Aalam'** encompasses everything that Allah created in both worlds. Similarly, Allah said:

(Fir`awn (Pharaoh) said: "And what is the Lord of the `Alamin" Musa (Moses) said: "The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, if you seek to be convinced with certainty") (S.26, V,23-24).

Therefore, just by discussing these few words **'Alhamdulillah Rabbil Aalamin'**, it negates the Darwin theory of evolution completely (Allah obliterated his whole theory in just a few words- amazing Subhan Allah). Allah says in the Quran that He is the sole Creator of everything, and He alone is the Provider and Sustainer. Moreover, Allah in the Quran tells us that even the pagans of Makkah and Mushrikeen (Idolaters) kept faith in these attributes of Allah:

Ask "them, O Prophet", "Who provides for you from heaven and earth? Who owns "your" hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who conducts every affair?" They will "surely" say, "Allah." Say, "Will you not then fear "Him"? (S,10, V,31)

Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim – The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

Rahman & Rahim are exaggerated forms of **'Rahma'** (mercy). **Rahman** meaning 'Most gracious' (general grace to all of mankind) and **Rahim** meaning 'Most Merciful' (specific mercy for the Muslims/believers). These attributes were also discussed in Bismillah.

Allay says:

Declare (O Muhammad) unto My servants, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful. And that My torment is indeed the most painful torment. (S.15, V.49-50)

Surely, your Lord is swift in retribution, and certainly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (S.6, V.165)

Malik Youmidin – The Owner of the Day of Recompense.

Malik – Owner/King/Master

Youm – (Moment/Day). – On this this day or moment there will be no concept of time, so day here means The Master/Owner of that time Period of judgement and not negating the fact that He is the owner of time, the world and the Aakhira.

The word Youm has many meanings in the Quran, Allah says:

*Indeed, your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in **six Days**,¹ then established Himself on the Throne. He makes the day and night overlap in rapid succession. He created the sun, the moon, and the stars—all subjected by His command. The creation and the command belong to Him 'alone'. Blessed is Allah—Lord of all worlds! Footnote: The word day is not always used in the Quran to mean a 24-hour period. According to 22:47, a heavenly Day is 1000 years of our time. The Day of Judgment will be 50 000 years of our time (see 70:4). Hence, **the six Days of creation refer to six eons of time**, known only by Allah. (S.7, V.54) – **Here days refers to 6 Moments** as Allah cannot be encompassed by 'Time'. And if we say it took Allah 6 days like our days then we are limiting Allah to be like his creation. As well as this we know that Allah just says 'Be' and it is (Kunfa Yakoon).*

Also:

'Fast a' prescribed number of days. But whoever of you is ill or on a journey, then 'let them fast' an equal number of days 'after Ramadan'. For those who can only fast with extreme difficulty,² compensation can be made by feeding a needy person 'for every day not fasted'. But whoever volunteers to give more, it is better for them. And to fast is better for you, if only you knew. (S.2, V.184) – Here Day is referring to our day as it's referring to us.

Deen – Recompense/Judgement/Reckoning. – Linguistically it can even have the meaning of the reward or punishment you will get is based on your Deen, Religion, or the customs you followed, for example your 'Deen' is your way of life in this world, and you will be held accountable for it.

Allah mentioned His **Sovereignty/Kingship of the Day of Resurrection**, but this does not negate His sovereignty over all other things. For Allah mentioned that He is the Lord of existence, including this earthly life and the Hereafter. Allah mentioned the Day of Recompense here because on that Day, no one except Him will be able to claim ownership of anything whatsoever. On that Day, no one will be allowed to speak/Intercede without His permission. Similarly, Allah said:

The Day that Ar-Ruh (Jibril (Gabriel) or another angel) and the angels will stand forth in rows, they will not speak except him whom the Most Gracious (Allah) allows, and he will speak what is right. (S.78, V.38)

Ibn `Abbas said, "Youm Ad-Din is the Day of Recompense for the creatures, meaning the Day of Judgment. On that Day, Allah will reckon the creation for their deeds, evil for evil, good for good, except for those whom He pardons." In addition, several other Companions, Tabi`in and scholars of the Salaf, said similarly, for this meaning is apparent and clear from the Ayah.

Allah is the True Owner (Malik) (of everything and everyone). Allah said:

He is Allah, beside Whom La ilaha illa Huwa, the King, the Holy, the One free from all defects) (S.59, V.23).

But how horrible will it be when We gather them together on the Day about which there is no doubt, when every soul will be paid in full for what it has done, and none will be wronged! Say, `O Prophet, ` "O Allah! Lord over all authorities! You give authority to whoever You please and remove it from who You please; You honour whoever You please and disgrace who You please—all good is in Your Hands. Surely You 'alone' are Most Capable of everything. (S.3, V.25 & 26)

Also, the Sahih Hadith recorded Abu Hurayrah saying that the Prophet said:

On the Day of Judgement) Allah will grasp the earth and fold up the heavens with His Right Hand and proclaim, 'I Am the King! Where are the kings of the earth Where are the tyrants, Where are the arrogant'?

Believing in Maliki Youmidin by way of fearing Allah controls evil in oneself and society in general, because if you firmly believe in the day of judgement, you will fear Allah as he will hold you accountable for your actions/deeds. So, if individuals believe in this attribute of Allah, then these God-fearing individuals make a society and thus, this is the ingredients to make a harmonious society. This is how Allah gives **Tarbiyya** (nurtures) his creation.

In summing up the first section of Surah Al Fatihah, from Alhamdulillah to Malik Youmidin it teaches the theory of the Islamic system (Creed/Aqedah/Tawheed, who Allah is). Five Attributes of Allah are discussed: (1) Allah, (2) Rabb, (3) Rahman, (4) Rahim and (5) Malik, similarly PbuH spent most of his time (13 years) in Makkah teaching Tawheed (theoretical part of Islam, Aqedah/Tawheed) that Allah is ONE so worship him alone. He is the Sustainer/Provider of the worlds, and he is the most Gracious and most Merciful and the only one who can forgive on the day of Judgement so worship him and ask him for help, no one else. Only once you have grasped these attributes of Allah you can then go on to the next verse or section which deals with Eyaka na'budu (worship), who to worship and how to do it (what to ask for) Eyaka nastaeen & Sirat Al-Mustakim.

So, what is Islamic Creed/Aqedah/Tawheed? It is **'La Ilaha Illallah'**.

La – No

Ilaha – Allah (God) the one who created everything and sustains it. 'Allah' and 'Ilah' are described in the following verses. Allah says by using Akli Daleel's (rational evidence):

Or ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth, and sends down rain for you from the sky, by which We cause delightful gardens to grow? You could never cause their trees to grow. Was it another god besides Allah?" Absolutely not! But they are a people who set up equals to Allah (S.27, V.60)

Or ask them, "Who made the earth a place of settlement, caused rivers to flow through it, placed firm mountains upon it, and set a barrier between fresh and salt bodies of water?¹ Was it another god besides Allah?" Absolutely not! But most of them do not know. (S.27, V.61)

Or ask them, "Who responds to the distressed when they cry to Him, relieving their affliction, and Who makes you successors in the earth? Is it another god besides Allah? Yet you are hardly mindful!" (S.27, V.62)

Or ask them, "Who guides you in the darkness of the land and sea,¹ and sends the winds ushering in His mercy?² Is it another god besides Allah? Exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him!" (S.27, V.63)

Or ask them, "Who originates the creation then resurrects it, and gives you provisions from the heavens and the earth? Is it another god besides Allah?" Say, O Prophet, "Show me your proof, if what you say is true." (S.27, V.64)

Illallah – Allah is The Ilah (God/Sustainer/Provider), Allah talks about himself and explains his Qualities and attributes in Ayat Al-Kursi (verse of the Throne), when he says:

Allah! There is no god worthy of worship except Him, the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs

whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission? He 'fully' knows what is ahead of them and what is behind them, but no one can grasp any of His knowledge—except what He wills 'to reveal'. His Seat encompasses the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not tire Him. For He is the Most High, the Greatest. (S.2, V 255)

Also, by way of Daleel Wahi (revealed evidence):

He is Allah—there is no god 'worthy of worship' except Him: Knower of the seen and unseen. He is the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. (S,59, V.22)

He is Allah—there is no god except Him: The King, the Most Holy, the All-Perfect, the Source of Serenity, the Watcher 'of all', the Almighty, the Supreme in Might,¹ the Majestic. Glorified is Allah far above what they associate with Him 'in worship'! (S,59, V.23)

He is Allah: The Creator, the Inventor, the Shaper. He 'alone' has the Most Beautiful Names. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth 'constantly' glorifies Him. And He is the Almighty, All-Wise. (S,59, V.24)

Eyaka na'budu Wa Eyaka 'nastaeen – 'You alone' we worship, and 'You alone' we ask for help.

This is the starting of the second section of Surah Fatihah and is the Maqsad (purpose) & Importance of the surah, also this is discussing the practical side of Islam as its to do with Worship/Ibadah (actions in Islam) to please Allah. We all talk about Human rights of men and women but what about the rights of Allah who created you and everything in service to you therefore, Allah's right comes first. Ibadah is the right of Allah; he doesn't need it from us but moreover we need it for ourselves, and we do it to please him and seek his pleasure.

Eyaka na'budu – **You** (Eyaka) Allah alone we **worship** (na'budu).

Eyaka – means 'You', we worship You alone and no one else, and rely on You alone and no one else. Notice here the word 'We' and not 'I', meaning 'We All' worship Allah (jam' at) (the whole world worships Allah). Eyaka na'budu is the perfect form of obedience, and the entire religion is summed up by these two ideas. Some of the Salaf said, Al-Fatihah is the secret of the Qur'an, while these words are the secret of Al-Fatihah.

Na'budu – Is derived from the word 'Ibadah' (worship) which comes from the word 'Abd' (slave/subordinate/servant); thus worship (Ibadah) is only for Allah alone.

The first part is a declaration of innocence from Shirk (polytheism), while the second negates having any power or strength, displaying the recognition that all affairs are controlled by Allah alone (reliance/we Rely on Allah). This meaning is reiterated in various instances in the Qur'an. For instance, Allah said:

So, worship Him (O Muhammad) and put your trust in Him. And your Lord is not unaware of what you (people) do. (S.11, V.123)

Say: "He is the Most Gracious (Allah), in Him we believe, and in Him we put our trust." (S.67, V.29)

So, take Him alone as Wakil (Disposer of your affairs), (S.73, V.9)

This is further discussed in 2 concepts, Ad-Dahhak narrated that Ibn `Abbas characterised these 2 concepts as:

Tawhid Al-Uluhiyyah: (You we worship) means, "It is You whom we single out, whom we fear and Whom we hope in, You alone, our Lord, and none else.

Tawhid Ar-Rububiyyah: (And You we ask for help from), to rely/obey you in all our affairs."

So, what is Ibadah? It is Submission/Humility/Reliance. (Normally a practical action)

Ibadah is based on 3 concepts:

- **Love for Allah**
- **Fear of Allah**
- **Hope from Allah**

Allah says:

Even` the closest `to Allah` of those invoked would be seeking a way to their Lord, hoping for His mercy, and fearing His punishment. Indeed, your Lord's torment is fearsome.

If all the above concepts are evident in ones Ibadah, then that Ibadah is perfect (intention must be for Allah alone), thus if any of these concepts are intended for someone else apart from Allah (i.e., fear) the this is '**SHIRK**' (associating partners with Allah, which Allah never forgives).

Ibadah is the right of Allah upon us, so if you make Ibadah (Eyaka na'budu) to Allah as set out correctly then Allah will most certainly help you. Further, if you keep 'Sabr'/patience in (Eyaka nastaeen) Allah will support and help you as you have relied on him with patience.

Everything in life has a purpose, the purpose of our life is to worship Allah alone (**Ibadah**), Allah says:

I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me. (S.51, V.56)

Everything is created in the service of humankind, and the reason for this is so that Man/humankind cannot have any excuses on the day of judgement that the message was not conveyed to him, or the signs didn't come to him. Moreover, Allah sent his Messengers to humankind over a period of time bringing certain messages or books to suit the people of that time, All the Messengers said Worship Allah Alone (Ibadah) Allah says:

We never sent a messenger before you 'O Prophet' without revealing to him: "There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Me, so worship Me 'alone'." (S.21, V.25) – This Ayat says Worship Allah 'La Ilaha Illallah' (Tawheed)

Indeed, We sent Noah to his people. He said, "O my people! Worship Allah—you have no other god except Him. I truly fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day." (S.7, V.59) Also carry on to Verse 85 – These Ayat show which Messengers were sent and why (Ibadah). The whole of this surah talks about the perished nations and why Allah destroyed them.

and worship your Lord until the inevitable¹ comes your way. (S.15, V.99) – Allah says worship until Death.

Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So, worship Him 'alone'. This is the Straight Path." (S.3, V.51) – Prophet Jesus says to Bani Israel (people of Israel) 'Worship or do Ibadah to the One Allah) 'Tawheed'.

Whatever 'idols' you worship instead of Him are mere names which you and your forefathers have made up¹—a practice Allah has never authorized. It is only Allah Who decides. He has commanded that you worship none but Him. That is the upright faith, but most people do not know. (S.12, V.40) – Prophet Yusuf says to his people 'Worship or do Ibadah to the One Allah) 'Tawheed'.

Say, 'O Prophet, ' "O humanity! If you are in doubt of my faith, then 'know that' I do not worship those 'idols' you worship instead of Allah. But I worship Allah, Who has the power to cause your death. And I have been commanded, 'Be one of the believers,' (S.10, V.104) – Prophet Yunus says to his people 'Worship or do Ibadah to the One Allah) 'Tawheed'.

Say, 'O Prophet Muhammad, ' "O People of the Book! Let us come to common terms: that we will worship none but Allah, associate none with Him, nor take one another as lords instead of Allah." But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we have submitted 'to Allah alone'." (S.3, V.64) – Prophet Muhammad says to people of the book 'Worship or do Ibadah to the One Allah) 'Tawheed'.

Say, 'O Prophet, ' "I am only a man like you, 'but' it has been revealed to me that your God is only One God. So, whoever hopes for the meeting with their Lord, let them do good deeds and associate none in the worship of their Lord." (S.18,

V.110) – Prophet Muhammad says I am a man/mortal/Abd (slave) like you then talks about ‘Tawheed’ (Also shows PbuH is not made from Noor).

Return to your Lord, well pleased ‘with Him’ and well pleasing ‘to Him’. So, join My servants, and enter My Paradise.” (S.89, V.28/29/30) – Those who become my ‘Abd’ meaning Slave (from doing Ibadah), Will attain Jannah.

Thus, all these Ayats prove the fact that over time worship (Ibadah) is and was for Allah alone and DO NOT associate partners with him (‘Shirk’ which is the opposite to ‘Tawheed’). Furthermore, Allah never, never forgives Shirk, as Allah says:

Surely Allah does not forgive associating ‘others’ with Him ‘in worship’,¹ but forgives anything else of whoever He wills. Indeed, whoever associates ‘others’ with Allah has clearly gone far astray. (S.4, V.116) – Allah will never forgive Shirk.

Indeed, Allah does not forgive associating others with Him ‘in worship’,¹ but forgives anything else of whoever He wills. And whoever associates others with Allah has indeed committed a grave sin. (S.4, V.48) – Allah will never forgive Shirk.

And ‘remember’ when Luqman said to his son, while advising him, “O my dear son! Never associate ‘anything’ with Allah ‘in worship’, for associating ‘others’ with Him’ is truly the worst of all wrongs.” (S.31, V.13) – Prophet Luqman says to his son don’t commit shirk Allah will never forgive Shirk.

O believers! Indeed, the polytheists are ‘spiritually’ impure,¹ so they should not approach the Sacred Mosque after this year.² If you fear poverty, Allah will enrich you out of His bounty if He wills. Surely, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (S.9, V.28) – Mushriks are unpure don’t let them enter pure place like Makkah.

Indeed, We have sent down the Book to you ‘O Prophet’ in truth, so worship Allah ‘alone’, being sincerely devoted to Him. (S.39, V.2) – Allah says to Muhammad worship Allah & don’t do Shirk.

Indeed, sincere devotion is due ‘only’ to Allah. As for those who take other lords besides Him, ‘saying, ‘ “We worship them only so they may bring us closer to Allah,” surely Allah will judge between all¹ regarding what they differed about. Allah certainly does not guide whoever persists in lying and disbelief. (S.39, V.3) – Allah is telling us that when you tell them not to do Shirk, they will say ‘we only calling upon our deities so that we may get closer to you Allah’. (Like the grave worshippers) They are lying and disbelievers.

Types of Ibadah:

There are more than 73 types of Ibadah mentioned in the Holy Quran, here below are a few examples:

- **Prayer:** Rukuh, Sajdah, Kayyam, Tawaf, Hajj, Etikaaf etc. However, many people think they are doing Ibadah but in reality, its 'Shirk' due to the intention they hold for the action. For example, the Shia's go to mosque of Hazrat Ali in Iran, and they do Tawaf there or they say 'Ya Ali maddat' (oh Ali help us), but we all know that Tawaf is only performed on Hajj for the sake of Allah and that only Allah can help us in time of distress or difficulty and need. As well as this amongst the Sunni's people go to the graves of pious people and asking them for help or a child or for an illness (shifa) or even intercession but we all know that this only comes from Allah. Yes, the Walli Allah were great people, but once they have left this world, they cannot even help themselves never mind anyone else.
- **Fasting:** Ramadan or any other of the Sunnah fasts that we know of.
- **Jihad:** Struggling or fighting in Allah's cause
- **Infaaq** Giving in the name of Allah Zakat/Sadaka
- **Dawah:** Propagating Islam
- **Sabr:** Keeping patience in whatever Allah decrees
- **Tawakkul:** Trust in Allah
- **Ithar:** Giving priority to Muslim brothers
- **Zuhhud:** Leaving everything that doesn't benefit you in the hereafter for the sake of Allah
- **Taqwa:** preventing oneself from forbidden actions and thoughts, thus getting closer to Allah and having God consciousness, in that knowing whatever I do Allah is watching me. Moreover, its avoiding Shirk and other major and minor sins. Narrated from 'Ibn Abbas', Imam Abu Hanifa the great Jurist of Hanafi Fiqh mentions that 'It is Taqwa that goes up and down (variable), but Imaan doesn't and stays the same (constant)'. However other Jurists/madhabs differ on this principle and say that it's the Imaan that goes up and down.

Eyaka 'nastaeen – You (Eyaka) Allah alone we seek for **help/rely on** (nastaeen)

However, [seeking help in] ordinary matters which are included under human capacity, and are connected and joined to the world of means, and there is not even a doubt from any person of it being an independent agent, like taking help from bread to remove hunger, or taking help from water to remove thirst; such seeking of help from other than Allah is permissible, with the condition that reliance is purely on Allah and the [entity] other [than Allah] is believed to only be a means, path and a manifestation of divine aid. [This is] just as a pipe is merely a path for the water to arrive, similarly the means are a path for divine effusion, and He is the real giver. The idolater believes that it is this pipe that is giving me the water, which is why he asks for water from the pipe and adorns the pipe. For example, the person that believes medicine to be a means and the doctor to be merely one who treats [the patient], there is nothing wrong. But if he believes the medicine to be independent in bringing about the effect and believes the doctor to be the one who grants good health, this will become 'shirk'. A main point to note here when we talk about 'means' is that a person is only capable of helping another is when he has the means to do so, so those people who go to the graves of pious people and ask them for certain things, note that the person in the grave does not have the means of helping or interceding for that person.

Throughout the Holy Quran Allah keeps on saying 'Ask ME for help in times of difficulty (As Allah has the means) and put your trust in ME'. Allah says:

Calling upon Him 'alone' is the truth. But those 'idols' the pagans invoke besides Him 'can' never respond to them in any way. 'It is' just like someone who stretches out their hands to water, 'asking it' to reach their mouths, but it can never do so. The calls of the disbelievers are only in vain. (S.13, V.14) – Only ask Allah in time of need, this is the right of Allah and no one else and those who call upon others than Allah have indeed committed Shirk/Kufr. Those upon whom they call don't even have the means of responding.

O humanity! A lesson is set forth, so listen to it 'carefully': those 'idols' you invoke besides Allah can never create 'so much as' a fly, even if they 'all' were to come together for that. And if a fly were to snatch anything away from them, they cannot 'even' retrieve it from the fly. How powerless are those who invoke and those invoked! (S.22, V.73) – No one can do anything without the help of Allah, and those who you ask from are so weak they can't even help themselves.

They worship besides Allah others who can neither harm nor benefit them, and say, "These are our intercessors with Allah." Ask 'them, O Prophet', "Are you informing Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or the earth? Glorified and Exalted is He above what they associate 'with Him'!" (S.10, V.18) – They cannot intercede for them.

and 'Do not invoke, instead of Allah, what can neither benefit nor harm you—for if you do, then you will certainly be one of the wrongdoers,' (S.10, V.106) – They can't give you benefit nor harm.

and 'If Allah touches you with harm, none can undo it except Him. And if He intends good for you, none can withhold His bounty. He grants it to whoever He wills of His servants. And He is the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'" (S.10, V.107) – Harm and benefit are from Allah.

Do they associate 'with Allah' those 'idols' which cannot create anything, but are in fact created; (S.7, V.191) – do not worship or ask from creation of Allah, only ask Allah.

If you 'idolaters' call them to guidance, they cannot hear. And you 'O Prophet' may see them facing towards you, but they cannot see. (S.7, V.191) – They can't hear so why worship them?

Say, "I have no power to benefit or protect myself, except by the Will of Allah. If I had known the unknown, I would have benefited myself enormously, and no harm would have ever touched me. I am only a warner and deliverer of good news for

those who believe.” (S.7, V.188) – Allah says to Pbuḥ ‘tell them people That I Pbuḥ have no power to benefit over anything.’

If Allah touches you with harm, none can undo it except Him. And if He touches you with a blessing, He is Most Capable of everything. (S.6, V.17) – Only Allah can bring someone harm and good, and only he can take you out from that situation.

Similarly, Allah points out how ‘He’ helped his Prophets Look at Surah Al- Anbiya, Allah says:

He rebuked ‘them’, “Do you then worship—instead of Allah—what can neither benefit nor harm you in any way? Shame on you and whatever you worship instead of Allah! Do you not have any sense?” They concluded, “Burn him up to avenge your gods, if you must act.” (S. 21, V.66-68) – Allah brought help to prophet Ibrahim (AS) and protected him from the fire.

And ‘remember’ when Noah had cried out to Us earlier, so We responded to him and delivered him and his family¹ from the great distress. And We made him prevail over those who had rejected Our signs. They were truly an evil people, so We drowned them all. (S. 21, V.76,77) – Nuh (AS) called out to Allah and Allah sent his help.

And ‘remember’ when Job cried out to his Lord, “I have been touched with adversity,¹ and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful.” So, We answered his prayer and removed his adversity, and gave him back his family, twice as many, as a mercy from Us and a lesson for the ‘devoted’ worshippers. (S. 21, V.83,84) – Similarly Allah helped Ayyub (AS).

And ‘remember’ when the Man of the Whale stormed off ‘from his city’ in a rage, thinking We would not restrain him.¹ Then in the ‘veils of’ darkness² he cried out, “There is no god ‘worthy of worship’ except You. Glory be to You! I have certainly done wrong.” So, We answered his prayer and rescued him from anguish. And so do We save the ‘true’ believers. (S. 21, V.87,88) – The same with Yunus (AS), Allah saved him.

And ‘remember’ when Zachariah cried out to his Lord, “My Lord! Do not leave me childless, though You are the Best of Successors”. So, We answered his prayer, granted him John, and made his wife fertile. Indeed, they used to race in doing good, and call upon Us with hope and fear, totally humbling themselves before Us. (S. 21, V.89,90) – Allah helped Zakariyya (AS).

Reflecting on these verses of the Holy Quran, you can clearly see that Allah is saying everyone should turn to ME ‘Allah’ in times of need, help, distress, and hardships (Eyaka nastaeen), and thus Ibadah is the medium for seeking this help from Allah alone (Eyaka na’budu),

Therefore, this shows how both terms; Eyaka na'budu and Eyaka nastaeen support each other and go hand in hand. Allah further says:

And seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, it is a burden except for the humble; those who are certain that they will meet their Lord and to Him they will return. (S. 22, V. 45,46) – This verse shows us that we must seek help from Allah through worship (ibadah).

Ehdinasirat al Mustakim – Guide us on the straight path.

Ehdina - Guide us.

Sirat – **Path** (the specific path leading to Allah)

Mustakim – **Straight** (what is the straight path?) It is (**Sirat al Mustakim**)

What is Guidance? In Arabic it means 'Hidaya' and in the Holy Quran Hidaya has many meanings, such as wisdom or Intellect. The guidance mentioned here in Surah Fatihah implies being directed and guided to success, (Guide us and give us the ability to go on the straight path) meaning guide, direct, lead and grant us the correct guidance.

When looking into the different meanings of Hidaya, In the Quran Allah says, 'I am the only one to give Hidaya' (guidance) in which ever form:

Musa (AS) answered, "Our Lord is the One Who has given everything its 'distinctive' form, then guided 'it'." (S.20, V.50) – Allah created man and then bestowed upon him wisdom and thus guided him.

Who created and 'perfectly' fashioned 'all', and Who ordained precisely and inspired accordingly, (S.87, V.2,3) – Allah created man in perfection and bestowed upon him Intellect and thus guided him.

Have We not given them two eyes, a tongue, and two lips, and shown them the two ways 'of right and wrong'? If only they had attempted the challenging path 'of goodness instead'! (S.90, V.8-11) - Allah showed man the two ways (good and evil) means, 'We explained to him the paths of good and evil.'

Allah says The Prophets bring down Hidaya (guidance) from Allah:

And We gave Moses the Scripture and made it a guide for the Children of Israel, 'stating: "Do not take besides Me any other Trustee of Affairs, (S.17, V.2. – Taurah through Musa was guidance.

Whoever chooses to be guided, it is only for their own good. And whoever chooses to stray, it is only to their own loss. No soul burdened with sin will bear the burden of another. And We would never punish a people until We have sent a messenger to warn them. (S.17, V.15). – The prophets bring down general guidance for man, and it's for man to choose to take it or not.

Surely this Quran guides to what is most upright and gives good news to the believers—who do good—that they will have a mighty reward. (S.17, V.9). – Quran is guidance.

Allah says guidance (Hidaya) is 'Taufiq' (ability), so we ask Allah to give us the ability to ask Him in the correct way, Allah says:

As for those who struggle in Our cause, We will surely guide them along Our Way. And Allah is certainly with the good doers. (S.29, V.69) – Allah gives us the capability (Taufiq) to do good deeds (struggle in the cause of Allah)

So therefore, Hidaya comes in the meanings of; Wisdom, Intellect, general guidance brought by Prophets and Taufiq by doing good deeds.

Sirat Al Mustakim – As for the meaning of As-Sirat Al-Mustaqim, Imam Abu Ja'far At-Tabari said, "The Ummah agreed that Sirat Al-Mustaqim, is the clear path without branches, according to the language of the Arabs. For instance, Jarir bin 'Atiyah Al-Khatafi said in a poem, 'The Leader of the faithful is on a path that will remain straight even though the other paths are crooked.'" At-Tabari also stated that, "There are many evidences to this fact." At-Tabari then proceeded, "The Arabs use the term, Sirat in reference to every deed and statement whether righteous or wicked. Hence the Arabs would describe the honest person as being straight and the wicked person as being crooked. The straight path mentioned in the Qur'an refers to Islam.

Imam Ahmad recorded in his Musnad that An-Nawwas bin Sam'an said that the Prophet said:

(Allah has set an example: a Sirat (straight path) that is surrounded by two walls on both sides, with several open doors within the walls covered with curtains. There is a caller on the gate of the Sirat who heralds, 'O people! Stay on the path and do not deviate from it.' Meanwhile, a caller from above the path is also warning any person who wants to open any of these doors, 'Woe unto you! Do not open it, for if you open it you will pass through.' The straight path is Islam, the two walls are Allah's set limits, while the doors resemble what Allah has prohibited. The caller on the gate of the Sirat is the Book of Allah, while the caller above the Sirat is Allah's admonishment in the heart of every Muslim.)

So, Allah is our destination and the Sirat Al Mustakim (Straight path) is the path to get there. It's not any old path, it's the straight, shortest, quickest (without any re-routes) and best path/way to get to

Allah. In Science or Engineering the straight line is the shortest distance i.e., from one point of the line to the other but if it's a curved or bent line it's the longer distance from one point of the line to the other and thus takes longer to reach to the end of the line which is the destination (Allah/Jannah). Therefore, even Science proves the fact that the straight line/path is the best and quickest way to make the righteous and blessed journey.

Allah says Sirat Al Mustakim is the straight path:

Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So, worship Him 'alone'. This is the Straight Path.'" (S.3, V.51) – *Worshipping Allah is the straight path.*

Ya'sin, By the Quran, rich in wisdom! You 'O Prophet' are truly one of the messengers. upon the Straight Path. (S.36, V.1-4) – The Quran brought down by PbuH is straight path (shows following Quran and Sunnah is straight path)

We have indeed sent down revelations clarifying the truth. But Allah only guides whoever He wills to the Straight Path. (S.24, V.46) – The revelations sent to other prophets were straight path.

And We favoured some of their forefathers, their descendants, and their brothers. We chose them and guided them to the Straight Path. (S.6, V.87) – Previous nations who were on the straight path.

If someone asks, "Why does the believer ask Allah for guidance during every prayer and at other times, while he is already properly guided, has he not already acquired guidance?"

The answer to these questions is that if it were not a fact that the believer needs to keep asking for guidance day and night, Allah would not have directed him to invoke Him to acquire the guidance. The servant needs Allah the Exalted every hour of his life to help him remain firm on the path of guidance and to make him even more firm and persistent on it. The servant does not have the power to benefit or harm himself, except by Allah's permission. Therefore, Allah directed the servant to invoke Him constantly, so that He provides him with His aid and with firmness and success. Indeed, the happy/successful person is he whom Allah guides to ask of Him. Allah says:

Our Lord! Let not our hearts deviate (from the truth) after You have guided us and grant us mercy from You. Truly, You are the Bestower. (S.3, V.8.) - Therefore, sought here is firmness and continuity of performing the deeds that help one remain on the path of faith

Therefore, (Guide us to the straight way) means, "Make us firm on the path of guidance and do not allow us to deviate from it."

Sirat Allahdhina Anamta Alayhim – The **path** of the people who are **blessed**. (The way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace)

This verse is the starting of the third section of Surah Fatihah and it's introducing you to the 3 Communities or groups of people and which paths they are on?

Sirat – Path

Alladhina – Of The blessed (or the blessed path) (what is the blessed path? = Ananmta Alayhim)

Anamta Alayhim – Those favoured/bestowed Grace upon by Allah. (The believers/Muslims, the description of the first group of people)

So, in the previous verse it discusses what is the straight path (Sirat Al Mustakim) and how to be on the straight path. And in this verse, it's giving you the answer that it is the people whom Allah has blessed and bestowed with Grace that are on the straight path. So, Allah is telling you about a straight path then asking a sort of question who is on the straight path and then giving you the answer that these are the people on the straight path.

The way of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace/favour (In'aam) defines the path we are asking for. 'Those upon whom Allah has bestowed His grace' are those mentioned in Surat An-Nisa' (chapter 4), when Allah said:

'And guided them to the Straight Path. And whoever obeys Allah, and the Messenger will be in the company of those blessed by Allah: the **prophets**, the people of **truth**, the **martyrs**, and the **righteous**—what honourable company! This is Allah's favour, and Allah fully knows 'who deserves it. (S.4, V68-70) – Those on the straight path are The Prophets, The Siddiqin, The Martyrs and The Righteous. And they are Blessed ones.

Ghairil Maghdubi Alayhim Waladhaalin – (Not (the **way/path**) of those who earned Your **Anger**, **Wrath** and **Curse** (The disbelievers/Jews, the description of the second group of people). Nor of those who went **astray** and **misguided** (The disbelievers/Christians, the description of the third group of people).

Ghair – beside/apart from/ not the path of

Maghdub Alayhim – Cursed ones and (who incurred Allah's wrath and anger upon themselves)

This is the way/path of the Jews (people of the book) who earned Allah's anger and wrath, Allah says In the Holy Quran regarding them:

And 'remember' when you said, "O Moses! We cannot endure the same meal 'every day'. So 'just' call upon your Lord on our behalf, He will bring forth for us some of what the earth produces of herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions." Moses scolded 'them', "Do you exchange what is better for what is worse? 'You can' go down to any village and you will find what you have asked for." They were

stricken with disgrace and misery, and they invited the displeasure of Allah for rejecting Allah's signs and unjustly killing the prophets. This is 'a fair reward' for their disobedience and violations. (S.2, V.61) – Allah struck them with disgrace and misery, and they invited the displeasure of Allah upon themselves)

Waladhaalin – Nor of those who went astray and were misguided. (Or the Munafiq whom are neither here nor there, wondering blindly)

This is the way/path of the Christians (also people of the book) who were misguided and thus went astray on the wrong path, they didn't follow the scripture and made their own way. Allah says In the Holy Quran regarding them:

They are the ones who trade guidance for misguidance. But this trade is profitless, and they are not 'rightly' guided. (S.2, V.16) – They are misguided.

So, not (the way) of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray) meaning guide us to the straight path, the path of those upon whom you have bestowed Your grace, that is, the people of guidance, sincerity and obedience to Allah and His Messengers. They are the people who adhere to Allah's commandments and refrain from committing what He has prohibited. But help us to avoid the path of those whom Allah is angry with, whose intentions are corrupt, who know the truth, yet deviate from it (Jews). Also, help us avoid the path of those who were led astray, who lost the true knowledge and, as a result, are wandering in misguidance, unable to find the correct path (Christians). Allah asserted that the two paths He described here are both misguided when He repeated the negation 'not'. These two paths are the paths of the Christians and Jews, a fact that the believer should beware of so that he avoids them. The path of the believers is knowledge of the truth and abiding by it. In comparison, the Jews abandoned practicing the religion, while the Christians lost the true knowledge. This is why 'anger' descended upon the Jews, while being described as 'led astray' is more appropriate of the Christians. Those who know, but avoid implementing the truth, deserve the anger, unlike those who are ignorant. The Christians want to seek the true knowledge but are unable to find it because they did not seek it from its proper resources. This is why they were led astray. We should also mention that both the Christians and the Jews have earned the anger and are led astray, but the anger is one of the attributes more particular of the Jews.

Allah said about the Jews:

(Those (Jews) who incurred the curse of Allah and His wrath) (S.5, V.60).

The attribute that the Christians deserve most is that of being led astray, just as Allah said about them:

Say, "O People of the Book! Do not go to extremes in your faith beyond the truth, nor follow the vain desires of those who went astray before 'you'. They misled many and strayed from the Right Way." (S.5, V77).

Saying Amin:

It is recommended to say Amin after finishing the recitation of Al-Fatihah. Amin means, "O Allah! Accept our invocation." The evidence that saying Amin is recommended is contained in what Imams Ahmad, Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi recorded, that Wa'il bin Hujr said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah recite after 'Waladhaalin':

Not that of those who earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray, and he said 'Amin' extending it with his voice."

Saying Amin is recommended for those who are not praying (when reciting Al-Fatihah) and is strongly recommended for those who are praying, whether alone or behind the Imam. The Two Sahih's recorded that the Messenger of Allah said:

When the Imam says, 'Amin', then say, 'Amin', because whoever says, Amin' with the angels, his previous sins will be forgiven.

Conclusion of Surah Fatihah

Such a great importance has been given to this Surah and thus it is placed at the beginning of the Holy Quran and it's the reason why we have discussed it in such depth. It's known as the Opening of the greatest treasure of wisdom and mercy (introduction of Quran, The Fatihat Al Kitab (key to the secrets of the book), Ummul Quran (the mother of the book). It's the Saba Masani (the seven splendid and repeated verses)

Al-Fatihah in its first section introduces us to Allah and describes to us who Allah is with his 'Hamd and Sanah' (glorifying and praising him) referring to his Attributes (Rabb, Rahman, Rahim, Malik). It also mentions the Hereafter, which is the Day of Resurrection (Malik Youmideen), and directs Allah's servants to ask of Him, invoking Him and declaring that all power and strength comes from Him which negates shirk and wasilah of others.

In the second section which is the most important point of the surah, it teaches us the way to get to Allah and please him through ibadah/worship (Eyyaka na'bud), worship him alone. As well as this you must put your trust in Allah when invoking him for Taufiq and declaring that all power and strength comes from Him and ask only from Him (Eyyaka nastaeen). It also calls to the sincerity of the worship of Allah alone (Tawheed), singling Him out in His divinity, believing in His perfection, being free from the need of any partners, having no rivals nor equals.

As discussed previously, Eyaka na'budu wa Eyaka nastaeen (to you we worship and to you we ask for help) is the integral part (maqsad/importance) of this surah because to have the correct Aqeeda in Allah/belief system to worship Him, we must purify our souls (rooh) and Qulub (heart) 'Shifa al Aqeeda' and 'Shifa al Badan' (purification of the body/physical purification) in order to perform our Ibadah e.g. Jihad & Infaaq fisabillillah and obeying Allah. Its only by this that we will gain a closeness to Allah and our worship will be accepted and this exerts not to do those acts which will take you away from Allah, and in doing so you have to sacrifice your 'Nafs' (self, ego, psyche, soul) by way of 'Amr bil maroof nahi anil munkar' (enjoining the good and forbidding the evil).

Furthermore, everyone in some way or form, when in difficulty/calamity, by nature ask Allah for help as they know in that situation only Allah can help them. So why then do you have 'Takabbur' (pride, arrogance, insolence, egotism, conceit) and why do you have 'Riya' (showing off and pretending to do good actions and worship, without having the real intention for doing it). So once the believer gets rid of all these illnesses (the illness of corrupted intention/Ilm (aqeeda/faith) and the illness of corrupted actions (worship/deeds) from his heart and body can truly attain the grace of Allah, your Duah's will be accepted by Allah and he will guide you on the Sirat Al-Mustakim, and then you will be of the Anamta Aalayhim (those whom Allah has favoured).

Al-Fatihah directs the believers to invoke Allah to guide them to the straight path (Sirat Al Mustakim), and getting close to Allah, which is the true religion, and to help them remain on that path in this life, and to pass over the actual Sirat (bridge over hell that everyone must pass over) on the Day of Judgment. On that Day, the believers will be directed to the gardens of comfort in the company of the Prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs and the righteous (Sirat Alladhina).

Lastly the third section teaches us that on this blessed path of righteousness (Sirat Al Mustakim) are the believers (Anamta Alayhim), and you have to be aware of the other two groups which are the disbelievers (Maghdub Alayhim and Waladhaalin) the Jews and the Christians and their path was of earning Allah's wrath and anger and being misguided and astray. The Surah warns against following the paths of misguidance, so that one does not end up being gathered with those who indulge in sin on the Day of Resurrection, including those who have earned the anger and those who were led astray.

Ya Allah, All due praises are for you, you are the creator of everything that exists, you are the Rabbil Aalamin (sustainer and nourisher of all the worlds), you are the Rahman and Rahim (most gracious most merciful to the believers and to all of mankind), you are the king, master and owner of the day of Judgement (Mailiki Youmideen). We all worship you alone and ask you alone for help and guidance (Eyaka na'budu wa Eyaka nastaeen). Guide us on the straight path (Ehdinasirat Al-Mustakim), The Path of the blessed ones (Sirat Alladhina). The path of those upon whom You have bestowed Your grace (Anamta Alayhim). Not the path of those who earned Your Anger, Wrath and Curse (Ghairil Maghdubi), Nor of those who went astray and were misguided (Waladhaalin), Ameen (O Allah! Accept our invocation).

May Allah Guide us all.