



# Surah al-Fātihah

Explained in Detail



Compiled by Abū Muhammad Yaḥyā



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## **Author's Preface (Muqaddimah)**

All praise is due to Allah alone, Lord of all that exists. I begin this humble work with the sincere intention to seek His pleasure alone, to serve His Book and the guidance of His Messenger ﷺ, to teach myself and my fellow believers, and to deepen my own understanding of His Revelation. I remind myself, before anyone else, that this writing is not for status, fame, nor recognition — but solely to seek His Face, His acceptance, and His forgiveness.

This reminder is for my own heart before it is for others, and I ask Allah to purify my intention from any hidden desires or worldly attachments, and to make every word a testimony for me and not against me on the Day when no soul will benefit except by what Allah has accepted from them.

### **Du‘ā:**

O Allah, I ask You by Your Beautiful Names and Perfect Attributes to make this work sincerely for Your sake, and to accept it from me even with its shortcomings and deficiencies. Make it a means for me and those who read it to draw nearer to You, to reflect deeply upon Your Words, and to act upon what is contained therein.

O Allah, grant us beneficial knowledge, hearts that are humbled before You, and actions that are pure and righteous. Do not make this knowledge a proof against us, but rather a light in our graves, a companion in our loneliness, and a witness for us on the Day we meet You. Ameen.

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## Introduction

All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. We praise Him, seek His aid and forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Him from the evil of our souls and from our misdeeds. Whomever Allah guides, none can misguide, and whomever He leaves astray, none can guide. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone, having no partners, and I bear witness that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger.

Surah al-Fātiḥah occupies a central and unparalleled position in the life of the Muslim, the framework of the Qur'an, and the foundation of Islam. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described it as “the greatest Sūrah in the Qur'ān” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī), and it was named “al-Sab‘ al-Mathānī” (the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses), reflecting its role in the daily ṣalāh and its core summary of divine guidance. It is recited more than any other portion of the Qur'an—at least seventeen times a day—yet it contains meanings that continue to unfold the more one reflects upon them. It combines affirmation of Tawḥīd, the perfection of worship, sincere supplication, and the refutation of all paths of deviation.

This work, *Surah al-Fātiḥah: Explained in Detail*, endeavors to present an in-depth, evidence-based explanation of this magnificent Surah using the most authentic sources—foremost among them the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, as understood and applied by the Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ. The exposition provided herein not only outlines the linguistic, theological, and jurisprudential meanings of each verse, but also explores their practical implications on one's belief, worship, and moral conduct.

Surah al-Fātiḥah begins with the most comprehensive form of praise—“Al-ḥamdu lillāhi Rabb al-‘Ālamīn”—encompassing all three categories of Tawḥīd: Rubūbiyyah, Ulūhiyyah, and al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt. It affirms Allah's perfection, His exclusive right to be worshipped, and His Lordship over all of creation. The Surah is constructed upon a foundation of sincere devotion, fear, hope, love, humility, and servitude, expressed in the supplication: “You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help.”

Furthermore, this Surah is the gateway to understanding the rest of the Qur'an. As the scholars have stated, the themes introduced in al-Fātiḥah are elaborated upon throughout the Muṣḥaf. Its structure teaches the etiquette of du‘ā', beginning with praise, followed by affirmation of servitude, and concluding with the most essential request: guidance to the straight path.

May Allah, the Most High, make this effort sincerely for His sake, of benefit to the reader, and a means of increasing clarity in ‘Aqīdah, steadfastness upon the Sunnah, and nearness to Him. Indeed, it is only through His guidance that hearts are corrected, tongues are made truthful, and limbs are directed to His obedience.

And Allah is the source of all success.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## سورة الفاتحة (The Opening) Al-Fatihah

### Al-Fātiḥah: The Opening of Revelation:

The name *al-Fātiḥah* is derived from the Arabic root “fataḥa – yaftaḥu”, meaning “to open”. It is The Opening — not only in its position at the beginning of the Muṣḥaf, but as the gateway to the meanings of the entire Qur’ān. Allah, subḥānahu wa ta’ālā, began His Book with this brief but powerful Surah, because within it lies a complete summary of the message of Islām.

The scholars of tafsīr and ‘aqidah have noted this significance:

- Imām Ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله said: “Sūrat al-Fātiḥah includes what the entire Qur’ān includes in terms of meanings. Everything that the Qur’ān calls to is summarized in this chapter.” (Majmū’ al-Fatāwā, 17/481)
- Imām Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله said: “Sūrat al-Fātiḥah contains the secrets of the entire Qur’ān. It is the greatest chapter, and all meanings of the Qur’ān return to it.” (Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa‘ādah, 2/68)
- Imām al-Ṭabarī رحمه الله wrote: “They called it Umm al-Kitāb because it precedes all chapters of the Qur’ān and because the prayer is not valid without it.” (Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, 1/127)

Among its names are:

- **Al-Fātiḥah** – *The Opening*, because it opens the Qur’ān and the prayer.
- **Umm al-Kitāb** – *The Mother of the Book*, due to its foundational role.
- **Umm al-Qur’ān** – *The Core of the Qur’ān*, since its themes encompass guidance, Tawḥīd, the Hereafter, and the path of the righteous.

Thus, Sūrat al-Fātiḥah acts as both a preface and a framework for all that follows in the Qur’ān. In just a few verses, Allah summarizes His religion, the call of His Messenger ﷺ, and the path of salvation for those who seek Him.



Al-Ḥasan ibn Abī al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110 AH, رحمه الله) — one of the great imāms of the Ṭābi‘īn and a scholar known for his deep insight and mastery in tafsīr said regarding Sūrah al-Fātiḥah: “Surely, Allah — glorified and exalted is He — has placed the knowledge and disciplines of the Qur’ān within the Mufaṣṣal<sup>1</sup> Sūrahs, and then He placed the knowledge and disciplines of the Mufaṣṣal within Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. So whoever understands the tafsīr of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah well, it is as if he has understood the tafsīr of all the revealed Books.” (al-Bayhaqī in Shu‘ab al-Īmān, no. 87)

This profound statement from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī illustrates the depth and comprehensiveness of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. It is not merely an opening chapter, but a summary of all revelation — containing the principles of faith, guidance, worship, sincerity, reliance, and the path of salvation. To deeply understand it is to unlock the core message of all previous scriptures.

This deep insight from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله — that all the knowledge of the Mufaṣṣal chapters is concentrated within Sūrah al-Fātiḥah — is also reflected in the statement of the Prophet ﷺ himself. In the ḥadīth of Wāṭilah ibn al-Asqa‘ رضي الله عنه, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Indeed, I was given in place of the Tawrah, the Seven Long Surahs (al-Sab‘ al-Ṭiwāl); in place of the Zabūr, the Mi‘īn (the sūrahs with around 100 verses); in place of the Injīl, the Mathānī (and this includes Sūrah al-Fātiḥah); and I was given, in addition, the Mufaṣṣal — from Sūrat al-Ḥujurāt to the end of the Qur’ān.” (Narrated by Aḥmad; authenticated by al-Albānī, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘, no. 1059).

This ḥadīth shows that different portions of the Qur’ān mirror the divine books sent before — and Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, referred to here as part of the Mathānī, represents the Injīl. The Mufaṣṣal, beginning from Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt or Sūrah Qāf (as noted by

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<sup>1</sup> The term al-Mufaṣṣal refers to the final portion of the Qur’ān, beginning with Sūrah Qāf (chapter 50) and continuing to the end of the Muṣḥaf, Sūrah al-Nās (chapter 114).

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar رحمه الله said: “Al-Mufaṣṣal begins with Sūrah Qāf and continues to the end of the Qur’ān, according to the sound opinion. It is called Mufaṣṣal (‘frequently separated’) because of the many divisions between its sūrahs, where the Basmalah (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ) appears often between chapters.” (Fatḥ al-Bārī, 2/295; see also 9/4).

These sūrahs are characterized by their shorter length, powerful language, and intense reminders. They are often recited in daily prayers and serve as practical guidance for purification, morality, belief, and accountability — encapsulating the essence of divine guidance in a concise form.

scholars such as al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar (رحمه الله), was an additional gift given uniquely to the Prophet ﷺ.

Hence, when al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (رحمه الله) stated that whoever understands Sūrah al-Fātiḥah has grasped the tafsīr of all the revealed Books, he was not merely expressing rhetorical praise — he was echoing a profound, prophetic truth: al-Fātiḥah embodies the central message of all revelation.

The scholars have also mentioned that whoever truly understands Sūrah al-Fātiḥah — with reflection and insight — will understand what Allah, subḥānahu wa ta‘ālā, intended through the entire Revelation. Everything that is mentioned in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah in general, the Qur’an elaborates on in detail. It is as if this Surah serves as an introduction, a summary, and a foundation — and the rest of the Qur’an is an explanation and clarification of what it contains.

Because of this, Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is rightly called Umm al-Qur’ān (The Mother of the Qur’an), and it is consistently referred back to as the starting point of understanding divine guidance. It opens the Qur’an — not just in arrangement, but in meaning and message — and remains the most recited chapter in the life of every believer.

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah alone is so comprehensive, so foundational, and so profound, that it is sufficient as a replacement for the previous divine Books — just as the Injīl was given as a replacement and confirmation of the Tawrah. The Qur’an, as a whole, is far greater and more complete than all three of the previous major Revelations combined — the Tawrah, the Zabūr, and the Injīl. So just imagine the greatness of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, which summarizes this final Revelation in only a few verses.

Allah, subḥānahu wa ta‘ālā, said: “And We have sent down to you the Book as an explanation for all things...” (Sūrah al-Naḥl 16:89) The Qur’an contains the ultimate guidance, the fullest clarity, and the most complete legislation — and al-Fātiḥah serves as its key and entry point. It encapsulates the essence of divine guidance in a way that surpasses what came before.

### **The Perfect Opening to a Perfect Religion:**

Indeed, in this Book — the Qur’an — is the completion of guidance and the perfection of the Religion. Allah, subḥānahu wa ta‘ālā, declared: “This day, those who disbelieve have despaired of your religion, so fear them not, but fear Me. This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islām as your religion.” (Sūrah al-Mā’idah 5:3)

This āyah marks a decisive moment in history — the day when revelation reached its pinnacle, and the Dīn was completed in every aspect. Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما

beautifully explained: “In this is proof that the religion is complete, so there is no deficiency in it; it is perfect, so there is no addition to it; and Allah is pleased with it, so He will never be angry with it.”

You may find something that is complete in structure, yet still imperfect in arrangement — but not so with this Dīn. Everything has been completed, perfected, and precisely placed — in its proper time, order, and wisdom.

This perfection includes the arrangement and content of the very first Surah of the Qur’an: Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. It is not only the most recited Surah, but also the most complete and most virtuous introduction to this perfected Revelation. Its placement, meanings, and themes were chosen by divine wisdom — without deficiency or need for alteration.

**The perfection of al-Fātiḥah is inseparably connected to the perfection of the Dīn:**

1. The perfection of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is a reflection of the perfection of the Dīn itself — as it was revealed as the most fitting introduction to a Revelation that completed all previous guidance.
2. Just as Allah completed the Dīn on the Day of ‘Arafah, He also perfected its introduction — and that introduction is Sūrah al-Fātiḥah.
3. Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is not just the opening of the Qur’an — it is a mirror of the completeness of the Dīn. Its perfect structure, meanings, and message are a divine expression of the finality of guidance.
4. The completeness of Islām as a religion is reflected even in its very first chapter — al-Fātiḥah — which is perfectly composed, divinely arranged, and thematically comprehensive.
5. When Allah declared the Religion complete and His favor perfected, He had already placed at its beginning the most complete and perfect Surah — al-Fātiḥah — to summarize the path of guidance from beginning to end.

**The Greatest Chapter in the Qur’an:**

Without doubt, Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is the greatest chapter in the Qur’an — a status clearly established by the Prophet ﷺ in numerous authentic narrations. Among them is the report of Abū Sa‘īd ibn al-Mu‘allā رضي الله عنه, who said: “While I was praying in the mosque, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called me, but I did not respond. Later I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, I was praying.’ He ﷺ replied: {Did Allah not say:

‘Respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life’} (Sūrah al-Anfāl 8:24).

He then said: ‘I will teach you a Sūrah which is the greatest Sūrah in the Qur’an before you leave the mosque.’ He took my hand, and when we were about to leave, I reminded him: ‘O Messenger of Allah, you promised to teach me the greatest Sūrah in the Qur’an.’ He ﷺ replied: “{Al-ḥamdu li-llāhi Rabb al-‘Ālamīn...} It is al-Sab‘ al-Mathānī (the Seven Oft-Repeated Verses) and the Magnificent Qur’an (al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm) that I have been given.” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 4474)

This declaration from the Prophet ﷺ does not merely establish the Surah’s status — it identifies it as the central Surah in worship, the first pillar of recitation in every unit of Ṣalāh, and the opening that captures the essence of the entire Qur’anic message.

### **Why Sūrah al-Fātiḥah Is the Greatest Sūrah in the Qur’an**

1. Divinely Named as al-Sab‘ al-Mathānī & al-Qur’ān al-‘Aẓīm {And We have certainly given you the Seven Oft-Repeated [verses] and the Great Qur’an.} (Sūrah al-Ḥijr 15:87) The scholars of tafsīr unanimously agree that this refers to Sūrah al-Fātiḥah.
2. No Revelation Equals It in Any Scripture The Prophet ﷺ said to Ubayy ibn Ka‘b رضي الله عنه: “By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, Allah has not revealed in the Torah, the Injīl, the Zabūr, or the Qur’an a Sūrah like it.” (Musnad Aḥmad 2:412, Sunan al-Tirmidhī – Ḥasan).
3. Recited More Than Any Passage in Revelation It is recited at least 17 times daily in obligatory prayers. “There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book (al-Fātiḥah).” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Muslim)
4. A Direct Divine Dialogue in Ṣalāh “I have divided the prayer between Myself and My servant into two halves...” (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim) Each verse of al-Fātiḥah receives a divine response — making it a dialogue, not merely recitation.
5. It Opens the Qur’an and Structures All That Follows It serves as the summary, the invocation, and the key to understanding the rest of Revelation. As Ibn al-Qayyim رحمه الله noted, the Qur’an begins with a du‘ā’ — and the rest of it is the answer.

When you recite Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, know that you are not merely fulfilling an obligation — you are standing before your Lord in a moment of intimate dialogue,

proclaiming the very essence of Islam. Every phrase is chosen by divine wisdom. Every verse summarizes entire volumes of creed, guidance, and purpose. Let it not pass your lips without passing through your heart.

### The Virtues of Surah al-Fatihah:

There are many clear and established virtues of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, as conveyed by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ through authentic narrations.

Among the most profound is the narration from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنهما who said: "While Jibrīl عليه السلام was sitting with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he heard a sound above him. So he raised his head and said: ‘This is a door in the heavens that has been opened today — it has never been opened before this day.’ Then an angel descended through it. Jibrīl عليه السلام said, ‘This is an angel who has come down to the earth; he has never descended before this day.’ The angel greeted (the Prophet ﷺ) and said: ‘Rejoice in two lights given to you, the like of which no prophet before you has been given: Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and the last verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah. You will not recite a single letter from them except that you will gain its reward.’”

This narration is recorded by al-Nasā’ī in al-Kubrā (5/12) and also by Muslim in his Ṣaḥīḥ (no. 806 in some editions, also referenced as 1/554). This ḥadīth highlights that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah was uniquely given to the Prophet ﷺ — it did not descend with any prophet before him. It was delivered by a new angel, through a newly opened gate in the heavens, signifying its unprecedented status and spiritual significance.

Imām ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sa’dī رحمه الله, in his renowned tafsīr Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān, elaborates on the comprehensive nature of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, highlighting how it encompasses the core tenets of Islamic belief and practice. He رحمه الله explains that despite its brevity, it encapsulates;

### The three categories of Tawḥīd:

1. **Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah (Oneness of Lordship):** This is derived from the verse: { رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ } "Lord of the worlds." Here, Allah affirms His sole lordship over all creation.
2. **Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah (Oneness of Worship):** This is evident in the verse: { إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ } "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help." This verse emphasizes the exclusive devotion and reliance upon

Allah in all acts of worship.

3. **Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa-l-Ṣifāt (Oneness of Names and Attributes):** This is indicated through the affirmation of Allah's perfect attributes, as seen in: {الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ} "All praise is due to Allah." as-Sa'dī رحمه الله notes that all of Allah's beautiful names and lofty attributes are encompassed within this praise.

#### **It's affirmation of Prophethood:**

The verse: {اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ} "Guide us to the straight path." Implies the necessity of following the guidance brought by the Prophet ﷺ, as the straight path refers to the path of the prophets and the righteous.

#### **It's Affirmation of the Hereafter and Recompense:**

In the verse: {مَالِكِ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ} "Master of the Day of Judgment." as-Sa'dī رحمه الله emphasizes that this affirms belief in the Day of Judgment, where recompense will be meted/inflicted with justice.

#### **It's Refutation of Deviant Sects:**

The supplication: {اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ} "Guide us to the straight path." Serves as a refutation against all forms of innovation and misguidance, as it seeks steadfastness upon the truth in both knowledge and action.

#### **The Sincerity in Worship and Reliance upon Allah:**

The verse: {إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ} "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help." Highlights the importance of sincerity in worship and complete dependence on Allah in all affairs.

In conclusion, Imām al-Sa'dī رحمه الله illustrates that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, though concise, is a comprehensive summary of the Qur'an's core messages, encompassing the essence of Tawḥīd, affirmation of prophethood, belief in the hereafter, and the necessity of sincerity and reliance upon Allah.

**Another unique virtue of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah** is that it is not only the opening chapter of the Qur'an, but also the very first Surah recited in every unit of Ṣalāh and it is an obligatory pillar without which the prayer is invalid.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book (Sūrat al-Fātiḥah)." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 756, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 394).



This means that in the five daily prayers alone, the believer recites Sūrah al-Fātiḥah at least 17 times per day. No other Surah holds this level of divine obligation and daily repetition. One may choose to recite various other Surahs during prayer — long or short — but Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is non-negotiable. It is a rukn (pillar) of the prayer; if omitted or misread, the prayer is invalid.

The Prophet ﷺ also said: "Pray as you have seen me praying." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 631)

And in another narration: "Whoever performs a prayer in which he does not recite the Opening of the Book, his prayer is incomplete... incomplete... incomplete." (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 395)

Furthermore, reciting al-Fātiḥah with proper tajwīd and attentiveness is part of fulfilling its right. The scholars agree that precision in pronunciation is part of offering it correctly. If one persistently fails to fulfill its correct recitation — especially when capable — the validity of the prayer is called into question.

Given that the first deed to be judged on the Day of Resurrection is the prayer, as reported in multiple authentic narrations, the centrality of al-Fātiḥah becomes even more evident. "The first matter that the servant will be brought to account for on the Day of Judgment is the prayer." (Sunan Abī Dāwūd 864, authenticated by al-Albānī رحمه الله)

### **Al-Fātiḥah: The Essence of Tawḥīd:**

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah embodies the three categories of Tawḥīd — forming the foundation of Īmān, the core of sound ‘Aqīdah, and the very essence of the Qur’ān’s message.

- **Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah** (Oneness of Allah’s Lordship): This is the belief that **Allah Alone** — glorified and exalted is He — is the sole Creator, Sustainer, Giver of life and death, and the One who manages all affairs of the universe. He has no partner in any of His actions.
- **Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah** (Oneness of Worship): This refers to the exclusive devotion that the servants owe to Allah alone — through du‘ā (supplication), khawf (fear), rajā’ (hope), tawakkul (reliance), isti‘ādhah (seeking refuge), istighāthah (seeking aid), dhabh (sacrificing), and all other acts of ‘ibādah (worship). Just as Allah is Alone in His Lordship, He is Alone in deserving worship. None is worthy of worship except Him — **Lā ilāha illa Allāh**.
- **Tawḥīd al-Asmā’ wa al-Ṣifāt** (Oneness of Allah’s Names and Attributes):

This is to affirm all the Names and Attributes that Allah has affirmed for Himself — or that have been affirmed by His Messenger ﷺ — **without** denial, distortion, reinterpretation, or likening them to the creation. We affirm them as they came, without asking how (bi-lā kayf). As Allah says: “There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.” (Sūrah al-Shūrā 42:11)

All three categories of Tawḥīd are present within Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, clearly reflecting the core message of the Qur’ān and serving as its divine introduction — a concise and complete summary of the call to Islām: to worship Allah alone in truth.

In fact, the very first verse of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah — الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ “*All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds*” — encapsulates **all three categories of Tawḥīd**, making it a foundational verse in the Qur’ān and a summary of the entire call of Islām.

- **Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah** (Oneness of Worship)<sup>2</sup> is affirmed in the phrase “*al-ḥamdu li-llāh*” — for when the servant attributes all praise and gratitude solely to Allah, he is engaging in an act of worship. This praise is an expression of love, reverence, and submission — forms of ‘ibādah that must be offered to Allah alone. The act of directing praise itself is a worshipful recognition of His perfection.
- **Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah** (Oneness of Lordship) is manifest in the phrase

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<sup>2</sup> A subtle but profound benefit to observe is that in this verse — {*al-ḥamdu li-llāh Rabb al-‘ālamīn*} — **Allah begins with Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah** (worship), before mentioning **Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah** (lordship). The phrase “*al-ḥamdu li-llāh*” is an act of worship, praise, and servitude — directed solely to Allah. This ordering is not random. It reflects that the primary message of Islām is not merely to affirm Allah's Lordship — for even the disbelievers of Quraysh affirmed that. Rather, the message is to **worship Allah alone**.

This mirrors the core da‘wah of every Prophet (عليهم السلام). As Allah says: “And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [proclaiming], ‘Worship Allah and shun false gods.’” (Sūrah al-Naḥl 16:36). So while Rubūbiyyah establishes that Allah is the only true Lord, it is Ulūhiyyah that demands from us action — submission, obedience, love, fear, hope, and devotion — all directed to Him alone. This is why Allah began the Qur’ān’s greatest chapter with **worship**, then clarified **why** He alone deserves it: because He is “Rabb al-‘ālamīn” — the Lord of all that exists.

“*Rabb<sup>3</sup> al-‘Ālamīn<sup>4</sup>*” — “Lord of all that exists.” Allah, exalted is He, is the One who creates, sustains, provides, owns, and governs all that is in existence. He alone deserves obedience and servitude because He alone is the Rabb. As He says: “*O mankind! Worship your Lord who created you and those before you so that you may become pious. He is the One who made the earth a resting place for you, the sky a canopy, and sent down water from the sky with which He brought forth fruits as provision for you. So do not set up rivals to Allah while you know [that He alone created you].*” (Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:21–22)

- **Tawḥīd al-Asmā’ wa al-Ṣifāt** (Oneness of Allah’s Names and Attributes) is present in this verse through two of Allah’s Names: “*Allah*” — found in the phrase “*li-llāh*” — and “*Rabb*” — found in “*Rabb al-‘Ālamīn*”. These Names affirm Allah’s perfection in His Essence, His Actions, and His relationship with His creation. They point to His unique Attributes — His mercy, authority, wisdom, and might — and must be affirmed as He affirmed them, without distortion, denial, or likening Him to the creation.

Thus, in a single āyah, Allah summarizes the entire message of the Qur’ān: that He alone is the only One worthy of praise, worship, and recognition — in His Lordship, in His right to be worshipped, and in His perfect Names and Attributes.

### From the Manners of the Qur’an: Generality Followed by Certainty in Clarification:

From the profound manners and methods of the Qur’an is that it often speaks in generality first, then follows it with specification and detail. This style carries deep

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<sup>3</sup> In this āyah, the Name “Rabb” appears in a **possessive form** — “Rabb al-‘Ālamīn” — where it is connected to a noun that follows it. However, in **Sūrah Yā Sīn** (36:58), the Name “Rabb” is mentioned in an **absolute form**, without being attached to anything after it. Allah, the Most High, says: “Peace be upon you — a word from a Rabb, Most Merciful.” (**Sūrah Yā Sīn 36:58**). This absolute usage carries a unique weight, emphasizing the majesty and mercy of Allah in and of Himself, without reference to creation — unlike the possessive form which highlights His relationship with the worlds.

<sup>4</sup> The term al-‘Ālamīn — “all that exists” — refers to **everything other than Allah**, exalted is He. Allah, in His Essence, along with His Names and Attributes, is the **Creator**, and everything besides Him is **created**. Regarding this, Allah mentioned the exchange between **Pharaoh and Mūsā** (‘alayhi as-salām): “Pharaoh said, ‘And what is the Lord of all that exists (Rabb al-‘Ālamīn)?’ Mūsā said, ‘The Lord of the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them — if you should be convinced with certainty.’” (**Sūrah al-Shu‘arā’ 26:23–24**) This dialogue affirms the comprehensive nature of Allah’s Rubūbiyyah — encompassing every realm, every being, and every force within the heavens and the earth.

wisdom: it opens the heart with a universal message, then guides the mind with clarification and application.

This same method is mirrored in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. In his speech, he would often begin with a general principle, followed by detailed explanation to clarify its meaning and intent — guiding both the common and the learned alike.

We see this pattern clearly in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. The central supplication in verse 5: {أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ} “Guide us to the Straight Path.” This is a general request for guidance, yet in verses 6 and 7, Allah details and defines this Straight Path:

“The path of those whom You have favored; not of those who have earned Your anger, nor of those who went astray.” Then, immediately following this in Sūrah al-Baqarah, Allah begins to unfold the specifications of this path in the most direct way. The very next verses after al-Fātiḥah open with: “That is the Book wherein there is no doubt — a guidance for the muttaqūn (those who have taqwā)...” (Sūrah al-Baqarah 2:2–5)

In these verses, Allah defines who the rightly guided are:

- Those who believe in the unseen
- Establish the prayer
- Spend from what Allah has provided
- Believe in all revelation, past and present
- Have certainty in the Hereafter

These qualities are not just characteristics — they are the practical details of what it means to walk the Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaḳīm.

Therefore, Sūrah al-Fātiḥah presents the general essence of the religion, and what follows in the Qur’an — beginning with Sūrah al-Baqarah — delivers the expanded explanation of that path. This Qur’anic method is not coincidental; it is deliberate, divine, and consistent throughout Revelation.

The Qur’an, therefore, does not leave the believer in suspense. Rather, the du‘ā’ is honored, and the answer is laid out immediately, practically, and mercifully.

This exact connection was highlighted by the Salaf. Imām Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī رحمه الله narrated that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib رضي الله عنه said: “The Straight Path is the Book of Allah.” (Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī, 1/173).

Likewise, al-Ḥākim recorded a similar narration from ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd رضي الله عنه, who said: “The Straight Path is the Book of Allah.” (al-Mustadrak, 4/83) — a mawqūf narration attributed to the Companion.

So it is as if the believer says in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah: “O Allah, show me the Straight Path.” And Allah answers in Sūrah al-Baqarah: “This is the Book — there is no doubt in it — a guidance for those who fear Allah.”

This divine sequence — du‘ā’ followed by answer, generality followed by detail — is among the mercy, beauty, and miraculous structure of the Qur’an itself.

Imām as-Suyūṭī رحمه الله affirmed this connection, saying: “This interpretation is befitting, as it displays a reason for the relationship between al-Fātiḥah and al-Baqarah.” (al-Burhān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān, 1/38). This observation by one of the foremost scholars of Qur’anic sciences shows that this connection is not just thematic, but structural and deliberate, reflecting Allah’s perfect wisdom in Revelation.

Aḥmad ibn Khalīl al-Khuway رحمه الله, a distinguished scholar of tafsīr who passed away in 627 A.H said ““The beginning of Sūrah al-Baqarah is directly linked to the conclusion of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. For indeed, Allah, subḥānahu wa ta‘ālā, describes those who praise Him as being the very ones who seek His guidance. So He responds to them, saying: ‘I have granted you what you asked for — a Book of guidance. Follow it, for in it is the Straight Path you seek.’”

This explanation encapsulates the divine harmony between praise, supplication, and response: the servant praises his Lord and humbly asks for guidance — and Allah answers, immediately and completely, by presenting His Book as the path to salvation.

### **When and Where Was Sūrah al-Fātiḥah Revealed?**

The majority of the scholars — including many from the Salaf — hold that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah was revealed in Makkah. Among those who stated this were Ibn ‘Abbās, Qatādah, Abū al-‘Āliyah, Imām al-Baghawī, and others. This is the view favored by most early mufasssīrīn, including al-Ṭabarī, and supported by numerous narrations and the context of Revelation.

In his explanation of Umdat al-Tafsīr (a commentary on Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr), Imām Aḥmad Shākir رحمه الله mentioned that some scholars held the view that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah was revealed twice — once in Makkah before the Hijrah, and once again in Madinah after it. This position can be found in various books of tafsīr, and while it

reflects a historical viewpoint, there is no authentic ḥadīth or chain-established report confirming a dual revelation of al-Fātiḥah.

It is also worth noting that some sūrahs were indeed revealed more than once, as indicated by certain narrations from the Salaf, often due to recurring needs or events. However, in the case of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, the correct and strongest view — according to the majority of scholars and mufasssīrīn — is that it was revealed in Makkah.

This is further supported by the verse in Sūrah al-Ḥijr, where Allah said: “And indeed, We have given you the Seven Oft-Repeated (verses) and the Great Qur’an.” (Sūrah al-Ḥijr 15:87). This verse, undisputedly revealed in Makkah, explicitly refers to Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. The wording “We have given you” (آتيناك) indicates that al-Fātiḥah was already revealed and in the possession of the Prophet ﷺ by that point — confirming its Makkan origin.

This was the preferred position of many great scholars of later times as well, including Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sa’dī رحمه الله, who stated that al-Fātiḥah is Makkiyyah by correct opinion, based on the agreement of many early authorities and the context of its revelation.

Therefore, the strongest and most authentic position is that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah was revealed in Makkah, early in the Prophet’s ﷺ mission, as a foundational chapter summarizing the entire message of the Qur’an.

### **Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and the Ṣalāh:**

The central role of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah in the life of a believer is best demonstrated through its obligatory place in Ṣalāh — the most emphasized act of worship in Islam. Not only is it recited in every unit of prayer, but it is also a pillar of the prayer itself; without it, the prayer is invalid.

One of the clearest evidences of this is the well-known ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah رضي الله عنه, who narrated: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ entered the mosque and a man came in and prayed. Then he came and greeted the Prophet ﷺ, who returned the greeting and said: ‘Go back and pray, for you have not prayed.’ The man went back, prayed the same way, then returned and greeted the Prophet ﷺ again, who repeated: ‘Go back and pray, for you have not prayed.’ This occurred three times, until the man said: ‘By Him Who sent you with the truth, I cannot offer the prayer in a better way than this. Please teach me.’”



The Prophet ﷺ then said: ‘When you stand for prayer, say ‘Takbīr, then recite whatever you can from the Qur’an. Then bow until you are at ease in rukū‘. Then rise and stand up straight. Then prostrate until you are at ease in sujūd. Then sit with calmness until you feel at ease. Do this throughout your entire prayer.’” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 724)

This narration — often referred to as the ḥadīth of the man who prayed poorly — emphasizes the correct form and essential elements of prayer, including the recitation of Qur’an, which, by scholarly consensus, begins with Sūrah al-Fātiḥah.

A Pillar of Every Unit: The Prophet ﷺ also said in another authentic ḥadīth: “There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book.” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Muslim) This means that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is not just recommended or virtuous in prayer — it is mandatory in every rak‘ah (unit). It holds a unique position:

- It opens every prayer.
- It is repeated multiple times daily.
- It represents the essence of humility, servitude, and divine dialogue.