

Surah Al-Fatihah (Opening)

Al-Fatiha is the first surah of Qu'ran, though this was not the first Surah of the Qur'an to be revealed. This mighty surah has many names, each one indicating a different aspect of its meaning. Among them are; **Umm al-Quran** (Mother of the Quran), **Umm al-Kitab** (Mother of the Book), **Sab'ul-Mathani** (The Seven Oft Repeated Verses), **Al-Hamd** (Praises to Allah), **As-Salah** (The Prayer), **Ash-Shifa** (the Cure), **Ar-Ruqyah** (the Spiritual Cure), **Asas al-Quran** (the Foundation of the Quran)

This Surah is both a Du'a (supplication) and an introduction of the Qur'an. It teaches the basic principles of Islamic faith. Thus Al-Fatiha indirectly teaches that the best thing for a man is to pray for guidance to the straight path, to study the Quran with the mental attitude of a seeker-after-truth and to recognize the fact that the Lord of the Universe is the source of all knowledge. One should, therefore, begin the study of the Quran with a prayer to him for guidance. Therefore, it becomes clear that the real relation between Al-Fatiha and the Quran is not that of an introduction to a book but that of a prayer and its answer. Al-Fatiha is the prayer from the servant and the Qur'an is the answer from the Master to his prayer. The servant prays to Allah to show him guidance and the Master places the whole of the Qur'an before him in answer to his prayer, as if to say, "This is the Guidance you begged from Me."

Surah Al-Baqrah (the Cow) (Revealed in Madinah - 286 verses)

Al-Baqrah has been so named from the story of the Cow occurring in this Surah but this is not the subject of the Surah. Generally, names of the surah of Quran are symbolic and not a title to indicate the subject of the Surah.

This Surah sums up the entire teachings of the Qur'an. Surah Al-Fatihah is a supplication for guidance. Therefore the Qur'an begins with that guidance. Al-Baqrah starts with the notion which says that the Qur'an is a guide for people who revere and respect Allah. Therefore, The Qur'an may be of no use to those who have no desire for guidance and direction. Such people will be deprived of its illumination and shall remain deaf, dumb and blind.

With regard to acceptance or rejection of faith (Tawheed, Prophethood and Life-after-death), mankind has been divided into 3 categories; believers, disbelievers and hypocrites.

Appointment of Adam as Allah's Vicegerent on Earth, of his life in the Garden, of his falling from Grace and prey to the temptations of Satan, of his repentance and its acceptance, has been related to show to mankind (Adam's offspring), that the only right thing for them is to accept and follow the Guidance. A Divine promise of forgiveness in spite of his wrong doing. The story of Adam is a parable for our own affliction and testing in life, so that we can reclaim our original condition through direct effort and proper direction. We must, therefore, move from being afflicted by mental desires and attachment to freedom by submission to the will of Allah.

Bani Israel (children of Israel) have been discussed in fairly large (remaining) portion of the Juz (verses 40–120). An invitation to the Guidance has been extended to them. Their past and present attitude has been strongly criticised to show that the cause of their degradation was their deviation from the Guidance.

An extended charge sheet of their transgression and disobedience has been laid against them. A great lesson for Muslim Ummah that if we behave the same way we will face the same consequences.

- **Allah's countless blessings** on Bani Israel has been mentioned. Prophethood as thousands of messengers has been sent to Bani Israel, Divine books and Sharia containing guidance in all aspects of life, deliverance from Pharaoh's persecution, status of chosen ummah to deliver His message, heavenly food and lot more.
- **History** of their breach of covenant and promises they made with Allah and His messengers and their traitorship through disobedience and how this criminal mentality had been nurtured in them since the very beginning. A mention of their superstitions and of other activities which were instrumental in debasing the Shariah and the Book of Allah in their eyes. Their sin of worshipping the Calf, insistence of seeing Allah, their discontent and disbelief, their violation of Sabbath, Their behavior with their own people, rejecting of faith despite knowing it, consequently rejecting Prophet Isa (Jesus) and Prophet Muhammad (saw), their animosity for Gabriel and other angels, their accusation against the Prophet Solomon (Suleiman), their learning of witchcraft, advising others and exempting themselves, disrespectful of Allah and His messengers, forgetting the responsibilities of Allah's Deen, malice and jealousy for the Prophet (pbuh) and his mission.
- This charge sheet exhibits an overwhelming failure as an ummah of Allah's mission, which results in a Divine decision mentioned in next passage of this Surah.