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Title **Textual Study of Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah in the light of Qur'ānic Sciences**

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Textual Study of Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah in the light of Qur'ānic Sciences

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Abstract

The Qur'ānic Sciences is one of the most important sciences which have been formulated for the preservation of words and meanings of the Qur'ān. When numerous sciences passed through the phase of compilation, many individual books were written on the subject. Later on, they were compiled on the basis of their fundamentals in the books of Qur'ānic Sciences. Alongside, another trend was to discuss various traits of the Qur'ānic Sciences in context of the Qur'ānic verses during interpretation. Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, *Umm al-Kitāb*, is one of those Qur'ānic Chapters which are gravid with an ocean of knowledge and wisdom. A significant study of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is to analyze it in the light of Qur'ānic Sciences. This article has been written with the aim to enlighten the relevant Qur'ānic Sciences in this compendious chapter of the Qur'ān.

Keywords: Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, Qur'ānic Sciences, *Qirā'at*, *Rasm*, *Fawāṣil*

Introduction

The Qur'ān is the finest miracle revealed on the heart of the Prophet (ﷺ), accoutered with infinite treasure of knowledge. The attributes which distinguish it over other Scriptures include its fantabulous order, exceptional coherence and its unique composition. Orators, rhetoricians and linguists find themselves exhausted to explain even a small part of it. Refining the intellect to apprehend the Qur'ān is indeed one of the most virtuous deeds. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

”خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ“¹

“The best among you (Muslims) are those who learn the Qur'ān and teach it”

Apprehension of the Qur'ān encompasses not only the knowledge of recitation but also the meanings which every word exhibits. Each word conveys various meanings, all the verses are stupendously lucid and every Qur'ānic Chapter is enriched with countless prudence in every subject. Since the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), there is a series of Qur'ānic Commentaries to explore the sagacious scholarship in the Holy Scripture and the process will be continued till the end of this world, still leaving the countless yet to be learned. A greatly beneficial knowledge for an exegete is to know the Qur'ānic Sciences which deals with the topics

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related to the Qur'ān in terms of its revelation, collection, preservation, recitation, abrogation etc. This research paper has been written with the aim to enlighten the Qur'ānic Sciences in the very first Qur'ānic Chapter, Sūrah al-Fātiḥah.

Significance and Novelty of the Topic

The literary material available on Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is mostly on the interpretation of its meanings, various names ascribed to it and its great virtues. This Sūrah has not been previously discussed textually in context of the Qur'ānic Sciences. Therefore, this article will focus on elaborating the sciences which are necessary for its interpretation and apprehension. Moreover, it would be greatly nourishing for the learners of the Qur'ānic Sciences.

Research Questions

This research paper would answer the following questions:

- 1) How important the Qur'ānic Sciences are in the process of Qur'ānic Interpretation?
- 2) How many Qur'ānic Sciences are implied on Sūrah al-Fātiḥah?

Research Methodology

Descriptive and Analytical Research Methodologies have been applied to this research paper. Various Qur'ānic Exegeses, books of the Qur'ānic Sciences, Prophetic Traditions, Lexicons and Journals have been consulted for explication.

Meaning of Sūrah

The word Sūrah is derived from the root letters (س و ر) which means something of high rank or a place to seek refuge ² or a sign. Its plural is Sūrāt or Sū'ar and it is an independent section or portion of the Qur'ān. ³

Meaning of Fātiḥah

The word Fātiḥah is derived from the root words (ف ت ح) and it means something which incepts or opens. ⁴

Analysis of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah in the light of Qur'ānic Sciences

Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is the incepting Chapter of the Qur'ān. It is also the first Sūrah which is recited in every prayer. Hereunder, this Sūrah will be analyzed with respect to the independent traits of the Qur'ānic Sciences:

1- Era of Descent: Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is one of those Qur'ānic Chapters about which there is dissention among Muslim scholars regarding era of its descent. There are four opinions about its revelation:

- 1) It was revealed in Makkah.
- 2) It was revealed in Madinah.
- 3) It was revealed twice; first time in Makkah and the second time in Madinah.

4) The first half of the Sūrah was revealed in Makkah and the second half in Madinah.⁵

Imām Qurṭubī preferred the first opinion to be the most accurate one as Sūrah al-Ḥijr has been consensually revealed in Makkah and it contains the verse of *Saba' al-Mathānī* which is proven through many Prophetic Traditions that it is Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. It is also agreed among Muslims that daily prayers were made obligatory in Makkah and there was never any prayer without al-Ḥamd.⁶

2- Order of Descent: A very few scholars believe that Sūrah al-Fātiḥah was the first chapter which was revealed on the Prophet (ﷺ). They evidence it by a report narrated by 'Amr b. Sharḥabīl al-Hamdānī Abū Maysara, summarized as under:

The Prophet (ﷺ) told Ḥaḍrat Khadijah (R.A) that he used to hear a voice when he was alone and he feared to happen something. She consoled him with sincerity not to worry. Meanwhile Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr (R.A) came in and she shared with him what the Prophet (ﷺ) had told her. She further requested him to take the Prophet (ﷺ) to Waraqah b. Nawfal. The Prophet (ﷺ) told the whole scenario to Waraqah that in seclusion he used to hear Yā Muḥammad! Say: (Bismillāh and whole Sūrah al-Fātiḥah). After hearing it, Waraqah announced the Prophet (ﷺ) about his prophethood and had faith in him with assurance of assisting him if he lived till that time. Imām Baihaqī declared this Prophetic Tradition disconnected (*Munqaṭi'*) and asseverated that this chapter would be the third one to be revealed after *يا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ* and *اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ*.⁷

Ibn 'Ashūr opined that the subjects of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah indicate that it was the first full Chapter of the Qur'ān which was revealed as it seems to be a preface of a sermon or a book, it depicts the principles of the Qur'ānic objectives.⁸

3- Circumstances of the Revelation

Imām Muslim quoted the following Prophetic Tradition which elaborates the circumstances in which Sūrah al-Fātiḥah was revealed:

“Ibn 'Abbās reported that while Gabriel was sitting with the Apostle (ﷺ) he heard a creaking sound above him. He lifted his head and said: This is a gate opened in heaven today which had never been opened before. Then when an angel descended through it, he said: This is an angel who came down to the earth who had never come down before. He greeted and said: Rejoice in two lights given to you which have not been given to any prophet before you: Fātiḥatul Kitāb and the concluding verses of Sūrah al-Baqarah. You will never recite a letter from them for which you will not be given (a reward).”⁹

4- Various Names of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah

The Science regarding the names of the Qur'ānic Chapter (اسماء السور) is an important topic of the Qur'ānic Sciences. There are some names

which have been deduced from Prophetic Traditions and narrations and some names have been enumerated by various exegetes. The following four names have been extracted from the Islamic text (*Naṣṣ*):

a) *Al-Saba‘ al-Mathānī*: This name appears in the following verse of the Qur’ān:

“وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَاكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ”¹⁰

“We have given you seven of the oft-repeated (verses) and the great Qur'an”

There is a debate regarding the determination of terminology “السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي”. There are many Prophetic Traditions which support the assertion that it is Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, e.g.

“الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ؛ وَهِيَ السَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ الَّذِي أُوتِيْتُهُ”¹¹

“Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds; which is *Al-Saba‘ al-Mathānī* and the Grand Qur’ān which has been given to me.”

b) *Fātiḥatul Kitāb*: It has been authenticated by the following Prophetic Tradition:

“لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ”¹²

The Prophet ﷺ said: “There is no Salāh for the one who does not recite Fātiḥatul Kitāb”

c) *Umm al-Qur’ān*: It has also been used in the following Prophetic Tradition:

“مَنْ صَلَّى صَلَاةً لَمْ يَقْرَأْ فِيهَا بِأَمْرِ الْقُرْآنِ فَهِيَ خَدَاجٌ - ثَلَاثًا - غَيْرُ تَمَامٍ”¹³

“If anyone observes prayer in which he does not recite Umm al-Qur’ān, It is deficient [he said this three times] and not complete.”

d) *Umm al-Kitāb*: This name has been narrated in the following Ḥadīth:

“الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ أَمْرُ الْقُرْآنِ وَأَمْرُ الْكِتَابِ وَالسَّبْعُ الْمَثَانِي”¹⁴

“Al-Hamdulillāh is Umm al-Qur’ān and Umm al-Kitāb and the seven oft-repeated.”

Other Names: The other names which have been mentioned by various exegetes are: *Al-Ṣalāh*, *Al-Ḥamd*, *Al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, *Al-Shifā’*, *Al-Ruqyah*, *Al-Asās*, *Al-Wāfiyah*, *Al-Kāfiyah*,¹⁵ *Sūrah Al-Ḥamd*, *Sūrah al-Ṣalāh*, *Asās al-Qur’ān*.¹⁶

5- Qur’ānic Readings:

It is one of the significant traits of the Qur’ānic Sciences in which different ways to pronounce a Qur’ānic word are discussed.¹⁷ A reading which has been reported through a continuous chain of narrators till the Prophet (ﷺ), is in accordance to the rules of Arabic language and is according to the ‘Uthmānic Script of the Qur’ān is called a Recurrent Reading (*Al-Qirā’at al-Mutawātirah*). If any of the three conditions is not met, it is called a Rare Reading (*Al-Qirā’at al-Shādhah*).¹⁸ There

are some words in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah which have variant readings. They are:

1) **اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ**: The seven reciters and the majority read it as ﴿ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ﴾ with raf'a on the letter dāl¹⁹ which is *Qirā'at al-Mutawātirah*.

There are some other reported readings as well which all are *Qirā'at al-Shādhah*: ﴿ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ﴾, ﴿ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ﴾ and ﴿ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ﴾²⁰

2) **مَلِكٌ**: The Recurrent Readings are: ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾, ﴿ مَالِكٌ ﴾ and ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾²¹ whereas, some Rare Readings are as follows: ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾, ﴿ مَالِكٌ ﴾, ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾, ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾, ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾,²² ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾, ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾,²³ ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾, ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾,²⁴ ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾,²⁵ ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾,²⁶ ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾,²⁷ ﴿ مَلِكٌ ﴾,²⁸

3) **اِيَّاكَ**: Majority reciters read the word with *shadd* on letter yā'²⁴ and is *Qirā'at al-Mutawātirah*. Rare readings reported are: ﴿ اِيَّاكَ ﴾,²⁵ ﴿ اِيَّاكَ ﴾²⁶ and ﴿ هِيَّاكَ ﴾²⁷

4) **نَعْبُدُ**: The Recurrent Reading of the word is ﴿ نَعْبُدُ ﴾, a Rare Reading reported is ﴿ يُعْبَدُ ﴾²⁸

5) **نَسْتَعِينُ**: *Qirā'at al-Mutawātirah* is ﴿ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴾ and *Qirā'at al-Shādhah* is ﴿ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴾²⁹

6) **صِرَاطٌ**: The word has also been read as ﴿ صِرَاطٌ ﴾ and is a Recurrent Reading³⁰. A Rare Reading reported is ﴿ صِرَاطاً مُّسْتَقِيماً ﴾³¹

7) **صِرَاطٌ مِّنْ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ**: A Rare Reading of the verse is ﴿ صِرَاطٌ مِّنْ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾³²

8) **غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ**: *Qirā'at al-Shādhah* is ﴿ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾³³

9) **عَلَيْهِمْ**: The Recurrent Readings of the word are: ﴿ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾ and ﴿ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾³⁴. Its Rare Readings are: ﴿ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾³⁵, ﴿ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾³⁶, ﴿ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾³⁷, ﴿ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾³⁸ and ﴿ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾³⁹

10) **وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ**: Its Rare Reading is ﴿ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴾⁴⁰

The reason to infer from *Qirā'at al-Shādhah* is the diversity of meanings in various readings. The difference of meanings lies in every reading is not contradicting but to the angle of explication varies. For instance: If someone reads اَلْحَمْدُ with raf'a on letter dāl, it is a report that all the praise is due to Allah from him as well as from all the creatures; whereas, if someone reads اَلْحَمْدُ with naṣb on letter dāl, it is a report that all the praise is due to Allah from him only.⁴¹

6- Merging (*Idghām*):

Idghām means to merge two letters through *tashdīd* in a way that they are pronounced in a sound of one letter.⁴² It is an important topic of the Qur'ānic Sciences which has an influential impact on recitation. The word الضَّالِّينَ in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah was actually الضَّالِّينَ. At first, there is elision on the mark (*ḥarkah*) of letter *lām*, then letter *lām* was merged in letter *lām*, hence two consonants are gathered: *maddah alif* and *lām mudghamah*.⁴³

7- Qur'ānic Script:

The Qur'ānic Script (رسم المصحف) is one of the most important topics of the Qur'ānic Sciences. *Rasm* means those inscribed letters which denote some meaningful word.⁴⁴ There are two types of Arabic Scripts:

1) *Rasm al-Qiyāsī* (General Arabic Script): It is the script in which the letters are inscribed according to the pronunciation.⁴⁵ It is also called *Rasm al-Imlā'ī*.

2) *Rasm al-Muṣḥaf* (The 'Uthmānic Script): It is the script which was designated for writing the Qur'ānic letters and words by Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (R.A)⁴⁶ (with the consent of his companions).

There are two words in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah which are not written according to General Arabic Script, they are:

1) الْعَلَمِينَ: It is written by omission of letter *alif* after letter 'ā'in.

2) مَلِك: It is written by omission of letter *alif* after letter *mīm*.⁴⁷

Both the Readings (مَلِك) and (مَلِك) have been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) and are Recurrent, therefore, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (R.A) wrote the Qur'ān in such a script which can accommodate all the Recurrent Readings for eradicating the conflicts among Muslims in the matter of Qur'ānic Readings.

8- Hysteron Proteron: (تقديم وتأخير)

This science deals with the rhetoric of the Qur'ān and is a significant topic of the Qur'ānic Sciences. 'Allāmah Jarjānī stated that deliberate Hysteron takes place in two ways: either predicate (الخبر) is placed earlier than the subject (مبتداء) or when the Passive Participle Noun (مفعول -Object) is placed earlier than the Active Participle Noun (فاعل -Subject).

⁴⁸ Imām Suyūfī identified ten good reasons for Hysteron Proteron in the Qur'ān: *Al-Tabarruk*, *Al-Ta'zīm*, *Al-Tashrīf*, *Al-Munāsabah*, *Al-Ḥaththu 'alayh*, *Al-Sabq*, *Al-Sababiyyah*, *Al-Taraqqī min al-Adnā il al-'lā* and *Al-Tadallī min al-'lā il al-Adnā*.⁴⁹

In Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, the verse (إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ) indicates that the object has been placed earlier than the verb. Various exegetes interpreted the reason of this rhetorical excellence in the Qur'ān. Imām Qurtubī explained that it has been done for specification (*takhsīs*). It is a usual practice of the Arabs that they prioritize something important. Here, the worshiper and the worship have not been prioritized on the Lord.⁵⁰

Maulānā Sanāullāh Pānī Patī mentioned: Though "إِيَّاكَ" is grammatically an object and should be placed after the verb and subject (in a sentence), but here it has been placed earlier for veneration and giving importance.

⁵¹

9- Number of Verses in Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah:

The total number of verses in the Qur'ān and the verses in each Qur'ānic Chapter has been a debatable topic among Muslim scholars. Sūrah al-

Fātiḥah is also one of those Chapters of the Qur'ān in which there is dissention about number of verses as well as identification of verses. The majority believes that number of verses in this Sūrah are seven and minority opines that they are six, eight and nine. The basic disagreement lies in either counting ﴿ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ ﴾ as the first verse or ﴿ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾ as a separate verse. Opinions of some Muslim scholars are stated below:

- 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd al-Dānī (d. 440 A.H) quoted various Prophetic Traditions which support the view that ﴿ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ﴾ has seven verses, out of which one is ﴿ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴾.⁵²
- Imām Qurṭubī (d. 671 A.H) opines that the authentic Prophetic Tradition quoted by Imām Muslim⁵³ evidences that ﴿ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴾ is neither a part of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah nor any other verse except Sūrah al-Naml.⁵⁴
- Imām Suyūṭī (d. 911 A.H) mentioned: The majority consider that the number of verses of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah are seven. The people of Kūfah and Makkah do not consider ﴿ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴾ as a separate verse but include ﴿ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴾ instead of it, the rest of scholars consider contrariwise. Imām Suyūṭī supported the stance of Kūfans and Makkans by quoting a Prophetic Tradition and a narration from Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (R.A).⁵⁵

10- Number of Words and Letters in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah:

The total number of words in Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah are Twenty Five and total number of letters are One Hundred and Twenty Three.⁵⁶

11- Homonym in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah:

One of the most prominent attributes of the Qur'ānic Words are their usage in different meanings. 'Allāmah Zarkashī declared this feature an addition to the inimitability of the Holy Scripture. There are various words in the Qur'ān which have same spellings and wording but different meanings, they are called Homonyms.⁵⁷ Pondering upon the words of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah reveals that ﴿ الذِّينِ ﴾ is a word which has been used in the Qur'ān for ten meanings. Three of them are: Islam, *Tauḥīd* and *Jazā'*. In this Sūrah, it is used as *Jazā'*.⁵⁸

12- Qur'ānic Verse-Final Pauses (*Fawāṣil*):

The last word in a sentence is called *Fāṣilah*.⁵⁹ It is the magniloquence of the Qur'ānic expression that there is a phonological consonance in the Qur'ānic verse-final pauses. Many verses in a certain Sūrah end on a same word or the words with similar pronunciation. They are called *Fawāṣil al-Qur'āniyyah*. Allāmah Dānī explicated that the end of every verse is *Fāṣilah* but every *Fāṣilah* is not necessarily the end of any verse.⁶⁰ According to Ibn Āshūr:

وتكرر بها، النطق صيغ تقارب أو تماثل مع تتقارب، أو حروفها أو آخر في تتماثل التي الكلمات
”السورة في“

علماء ومن، "متماثلة كثيرة آيات في النظم من مقصود تقاربها أو تماثلها بأن يؤذن تكرراً
عزّفاً من القرآن
القرآنية بالفاصلة تسميتها على الدليل وجاء، "الآية في كلمة آخر أي الجملة، آخر كلمة " :بأنها:
تعالى قوله

كِتَابٌ 62 . 61

آيَاتُهُ فَصَلَّتْ

Imām Qurṭubī accentuated their significance in the following words:

"المنظوم الكلام وزينة حلية القرآنية الفواصل"،⁶³

In Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, *Fawāṣil al-Āyāt* are letters *Nūn* and *Mīm* ⁶⁴ exhibiting magnificent cadence of the Qur'ān phonologically.

13- Iteration (*Takrār*) in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah:

The Science of Iteration in the Qur'ān is an important topic of the Qur'ānic Sciences about which some authors wrote independent books. There are many words which have been repeated deliberately in the Qur'ān for intensification. At the following four places in Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, there is iteration:

1) The very first iteration in this Sūrah is (الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنِ) which is repeated after (الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحْمَنُ اللَّهُ بِسْمِ). There are two maxims about the reasons of this iteration, they are:

- 'Alī b. 'Isā said that it is repeated for emphasizing.
- Qāsim b. Ḥabīb opined that Al-Ḥamd (all the praise) is only due to the Almighty Allah who is the Most Merciful and the ever Beneficent. 'Allāmah Kirmānī stated that: It has been repeated because mercy is what has been bestowed upon the needy. In the first verse, only the bestower has been mentioned and not the bestowee, so here both have been mentioned at the same time. الرّحيم الرّحمن is repeated after رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ which denotes that Allāh is الرَّحْمَنُ for all mankind, He provides them livelihood; whereas, الرَّحِيمِ is specific to believers only on whom Allāh will not only be Merciful on the Day of Judgement but will also forgive them.⁶⁵

2) In the verse (نَسْتَعِينُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ)، the word إِيَّاكَ has been repeated as well as placed earlier. إِيَّاكَ has not been used only once as in the case of Sūrah al-Duḥā where only one Passive Participle Noun out of two suffices in the verse (قَلْبِي وَمَا رَبُّكَ وَدَعَاكَ مَا)⁶⁶ which means "قلاك ما" and in later verses it means "فاغناك - فهداك - فأواك" because here, hysteron is the optimal option. There is non-similarity between Sūrah al-Fātiḥah and Sūrah al-Duḥā, if the verse had been like this: "نَسْتَعِينُ وَنَعْبُدُ إِيَّاكَ"، it would have not shown the real significance to convey the meaning of نَعْبُدُ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ إِيَّاكَ or نَسْتَعِينُ وَإِيَّاكَ⁶⁷ نَسْتَعِينُكَ إِيَّاكَ وَنَعْبُدُكَ إِيَّاكَ.

3) The word صِرَاطِ has been repeated in (عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْعَمْتَ الَّذِينَ صِرَاطِ) because the reason of its repetition is similar to that of الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنِ. Here the word *Ṣirāṭ* is the path to follow. In the previous verse, only the path has been mentioned and not the people to follow it. In repetition, this

word also elaborates the people whom to be followed i.e. the Prophets and the Righteous.⁶⁸

14- Abrogation in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah:

There is no verse in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah which has either been abrogated or abrogates any other verse.⁶⁹

15- Allegorical Verses in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah:

This whole Chapter is Categorical and there is no Allegorical verse in it.

16- Obscure Words in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah:

The Science of Obscure Words holds a significant place in the Qur'ānic Sciences. Its apprehension is mandatory for every exegete. Obscurity lies in those words which do not convey apparent meanings and their use is not familiar.⁷⁰ In the Qur'ān, there is actually no word which itself is vague or ambiguous but due to an extensive variety of words, variant tribal dialects and different mental capabilities of apprehension, some people are not able to get their exact meaning. Therefore, some words of the Qur'ān used to be termed as "Obscure (غريب)". Various authors categorized almost every word of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah under the explanation of Obscure Words to facilitate non-Arabs. They are as under:

- 1) {اللَّهِ بِسْمِ}: I begin with the name of Allah.
- 2) {العَالَمُونَ}: All types of creation, namely men, jinn, and angels.
- 3) {الَّذِينَ يَوْمَ}: Doomsday. It is called that because it is the Day of recompense and reckoning.
- 4) {الصِّرَاطِ}: The path.
- 5) {عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْعَمْتَ الَّذِينَ صِرَاطِ}: It means prophets and believers.
- 6) {عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَغْضُوبِ}: The Jews.
- 7) {الضَّالُّونَ}: The Christians.⁷¹

17- Contents and Implications of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah:

The contents of this glorious Sūrah include: Edifying mankind to seek blessings of the Most Gracious and the Most Beneficent Allāh before every deed, advising them to be obliged for every benefaction from the Creator, having firm faith in the distribution of subsistence, strengthening their hopes only towards the Most Merciful Allāh, warning them to wait for the Resurrection Day, to purify their worship for only Allāh and abstaining from any kind of idolatry, soliciting virtuousness from only Allāh, asking every help and support only from Allāh, imploring persistence from Allāh in the way adopted by the righteous, aspiration to be on the path of the virtuous, seeking refuge from the wrath of Allāh and depravity in all the matters and deeds.⁷²

18- Virtues of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah:

There are numerous Prophetic Traditions and narrations reported in Ḥadīth Collections regarding virtues, superiority and advantages of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah. Some of them are quoted as under:

“Narrated Abū Hurairah (R.A): The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to Ubay b. Ka‘b (R.A) 'Would you like for me to teach you a Sūrah the likes of which has neither been revealed in the Torah, nor the Bible, nor the Psalm, nor in the entire Qur'an?' He said: "Yes, O Messenger of Allah!' The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'What do you recite in your Salāh?' He said: 'I recite Umm Al-Qur'an.' So the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: 'By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! The like of it has neither been revealed in the Torah, nor the Bible nor the Psalm, nor in the Furqān. It is the seven oft-repeated, and the Magnificent Qur’ān which I was given'.”⁷³

Another ḥadīth has been narrated by Abū Sa‘īd al-Mu‘alla in Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī which explains the superiority of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah.⁷⁴

“Narrated Ibn ‘Abbās (R.A): Some of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by some people staying at a place where there was water, and one of those people had been stung by a scorpion. A man from those staying near the water, came and said to the companions of the Prophet, "Is there anyone among you who can do Ruqyah as near the water there is a person who has been stung by a scorpion." So one of the Prophet's companions went to him and recited Sūrah al-Fātiḥah for a sheep as his fees. The patient got cured and the man brought the sheep to his companions who disliked that and said, "You have taken wages for reciting Allah's Book." When they arrived at Medina, they said, ' O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! He has taken wages for reciting Allah's Book" On that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said, "You are the most entitled to take wages for doing a Ruqyah with Allah's Book."”⁷⁵

A similar ḥadīth has been narrated by Imām Muslim in which this Sūrah was recited to cure the chief of a tribe bitten by scorpion.⁷⁶ Another Prophetic Tradition has been quoted by Imām Muslim which shows its utmost significance:

“Abū Ḥurairah reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) declared that Allah the Exalted had said: I have divided the prayer into two halves between Me and My servant, and My servant will receive what he asks. When the servant says: Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the universe, Allah the Most High says: My servant has praised Me. And when he (the servant) says: The Most Compassionate, the Merciful, Allah the Most High says: My servant has lauded Me. And when he (the servant) says: Master of the Day of judgement, He remarks: My servant has glorified Me and sometimes He would say: My servant entrusted (his affairs) to Me. And when he (the worshipper) says: It is You we worship and You we ask for help, He (Allah) says: This is between Me and My servant, and My servant will receive what he asks for. Then, when he (the worshipper) says: Guide us to the straight path, the path of those to whom You had been Gracious not of those who have incurred Your

displeasure, nor of those who have gone astray, He (Allah) says: This is for My servant, and My servant will receive what he asks for.”⁷⁷

Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (R.A) said “Moses, may peace be upon him, has made 70 volumes of commentary on the Torah. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ gave his permission, I would have loaded 70 camels with commentary on al-Fātiḥah.”

Conclusion:

- Sūrah al-Fātiḥah is the opening chapter of the Qur’ān as well as the prayers.
- This Qur’ānic Chapter was revealed in Makkah.
- It was the fifth Sūrah which was revealed on the Prophet (ﷺ) but the first one to be revealed in full.
- This Qur’ānic Chapter has Seven verses, of which Bismillah is not a part.
- This chapter has several names, some of them have been deduced from the Qur’ān and the Prophetic Traditions; while others have been extracted from its virtues and exceptional merits.
- There are numerous words in this chapter which have multiple readings, some of them are recurrent and others are rare.
- Two words in this chapter are not written in General Arabic Script but they are written in the ‘Uthmānic Script.
- Al-Dīn is a homonymous word in this chapter of the Qur’ān.
- The phenomenon of Merging, Hysteron Proteron and Iteration are found in it.
- *Fawāṣil al-Āyāt* are letters *Nūn* and *Mīm* in Sūrah al-Fātiḥah which manifest rhetoric excellence of the Holy Scripture.
- There is neither any Abrogation nor any Allegory in the whole chapter.
- This chapter exhibits stupendous contents, implications and virtues which classify it among the highest ranked Qur’ānic Chapters.

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