

AN EXEGESIS  
OF THE OPENING CHAPTER  
OF THE QUR'AAN

THE GREATEST SOORAH  
IN THE QUR'AAN

*Al Faatihah*

أعظم سورة في القرآن  
تفسير سورة الفاتحة

# أَعْظَمُ سُورَةٍ فِي الْقُرْآنِ

The  
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## تَفْسِيرُ سُورَةِ الْفَاتِحَةِ

AN EXEGESIS OF THE OPENING  
CHAPTER OF THE QUR'AAN

Gathered from the *tafseer* of,  
Shaikh 'Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Naasir as-Sa'dee  
Born 1307H Died 1376H  
*Rahimahullaah*

English compilation idea of,  
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## BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR



“Ash-Shaikh Aboo `Abdillaah `Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Naasir ibn `Abdillaah ibn Naasir Aal-Sa'dee, from the tribe of Tameem; he was born in the town of `Unayzah in the district of al-Qaseem [Saudi Arabia], on the 12<sup>th</sup> of *Muharram* 1307H, and his mother died when he was four years old. Then his father died when he was seven years old, so he grew up as an orphan. However, he had a fine upbringing, and it was noticed that from an early age he was distinguished by intelligence and a desire to learn. He read the whole Qur'aan after the death of his father and then memorized it completely, and he was fully proficient in it at the age of eleven. Then he occupied himself with acquiring knowledge from the scholars of his land, and from those who came to his land. So he strove and exerted himself until he acquired a good portion of every branch of knowledge. Upon reaching the age of twenty-three he sat to teach. So he would learn and also teach, and spent all of his time in that. This continued until in the year 1350AH when he took charge of all teaching in his town, and all students referred back to him.

He took knowledge from Shaikh Ibraaheem ibn Hamd ibn Jaasir, and he was the first teacher he studied with. He described his Shaikh as a memorizer of *hadeeth*, and he would speak about his piety and how he used to love and take care of the poor. Often a poor person would come to him in winter and he would take off one of his two garments and give it to the poor person, even though he himself needed it and possessed very little himself, may Allaah have mercy upon him.

Also from his Shaikhs was Muhammad ibn `Abdul-Kareem ash-Shibl, with whom he learned *Fiqh*, sciences of the Arabic language and other than that.

He also studied with ash-Shaikh Saalih ibn `Uthmaan al-Qaadee, the judge of `Unayzah. He learnt from him *Tawheed*, *Tafseer*, *Fiqh*: its *Usool* and its details, and the sciences of the Arabic language. He was the one whom he studied with the most, and he kept his company constantly until he passed away (May Allaah have mercy upon him).

He also studied with Shaikh `Abdullaah ibn `Aayid, and Shaikh Sa'b al-Quwayjaree, and Shaikh `Alee as-Sinaanee, and Shaikh `Alee an-Naasir Aboo Waadee with whom he studied *hadeeth*, and took the six books and others from him with 'ijaazah'<sup>1</sup>.

He also studied with Shaikh Muhammad ibn ash-Shaikh `Abdul`Azeez Aal Muhammad al-Maani<sup>2</sup>; he studied with him in `Unayzah.

Also from his Shaikhs was Shaikh Muhammad ash-Shanqeetee (who settled in the *Hijaaz*...) when he came to teach in `Unayzah. He studied with him *Tafseer*, *Hadeeth*, the sciences of *Hadeeth*, and the sciences of the language - such as grammar, morphology and so on.

He was upon a high level of virtuous manners, showing humility with the young and the old, and the rich and the poor.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ijaazah* is the permission to narrate.

<sup>2</sup> He is the director of cultural/educational affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at present.

He used to spend some of his time sitting in gatherings with whoever wished to attend, so the gathering would be a gathering of knowledge. He was keen that these gatherings should discuss matters of knowledge and social affairs, and the people of the gatherings would derive great benefit from the useful discussions they involved themselves in. So their recreational gatherings were turned into gatherings of worship and knowledge. He would speak to each person with whatever befitted him, and would discuss with him matters that would be beneficial to his worldly life and his Hereafter.

He would frequently resolve dispute in a just manner which satisfied both sides.

He had great concern for the poor, the needy, and strangers and he would personally assist them as far as he was able, and he would encourage the wealthy people - those whom he knew to love doing good - to be compassionate towards them.

He was upon a very high level of good manners, chastity, purity of spirit, and firmly resolved and serious in all his affairs.

He was also the best of people in his manner of teaching, and the best at causing his students to understand...

He occupied himself most of all and benefited most from the books of *Shaikhul-Islaam* Ibn Taimiyyah and his student Ibnul-Qayyim. This benefited him greatly with regard to knowledge of *Usool*, *Tawheed*, *Tafseer* and *Fiqh* and other branches of beneficial knowledge...

He was especially proficient in *Tafseer*, having read a number of *Tafseers* and he excelled in it. He authored a fine *Tafseer*, in a

number of volumes...entitled '*Tayseerul-Kareemir-Rahmaan fee Tafseer Kalaamil-Mannaan*'.

...He passed away at the age of 69 in the year 1376H (after *Hijrah*) in the town of `Unayzah, may Allaah have mercy upon him..."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Abridged from the biography written by one of his students and included as a preface to his *Tafseer*.

Note: The presence of double square brackets in the text indicates additions to the work of the Shaikh, *rahimahullaah*, which have been added for clarity, completeness of meaning, and continuity of the translation. [transl.]

## TAFSEER OF SOORATUL-FAATIHAH



(i)

﴿ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴾

Meaning: “In the name of Allaah, the Extremely Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy.”

بِسْمِ

Meaning: I begin with every name of Allaah, the Most High, since the word ‘ism’ (name) occurs in the singular and attached state – therefore it covers all of Allaah’s perfect names.

اللَّهِ

“Allaah” is the One who is revered and worshipped, Who has the right that He be singled out with all worship – due to His possessing the attributes of Divinity, these being attributes of Perfection.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Meaning: “The Extremely Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy”, are two names which show that He, the Most High, possesses the attribute of vast and tremendous Mercy (*ar-Rahmah*), which is such that it encompasses everything, and covers every living thing. He, furthermore, decreed it for His Pious and obedient servants who keep their duty to Him – those who follow His Prophets and Messengers: for them there is unrestricted Mercy;



whereas the rest of the people receive only a portion of His Mercy.

You should also know that from the principles agreed upon by the Predecessors (*Salaf*) and Imaams of the *Ummah* is: to have true Faith (*Eemaan*)<sup>4</sup> in Allaah, and in His attributes (*sifaat*), and in that which the attributes necessitate. So they believe, for example, that He is '*ar-Rahmaan*' (the Extremely Merciful) and '*ar-Raheem*' (the One who bestows His Mercy), He possesses the attribute of Mercy, and this Mercy has an effect upon the people. So all blessings are from the effects of His Mercy. Likewise regarding His being '*al-'Aleem*' (the All-Knowing) - it means that He is the All-Knowing One, that He possesses the attribute of Knowledge - by which He knows everything; and that He is the All-Powerful, possessing full power and ability, able to do everything.

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<sup>4</sup> '*Eemaan*' - is translated herein as 'true Faith'. As for its meaning, then Shaikh as-Sa'dee said in '*at-Tawdeeh wal-Bayaan li-Shajaratil-Eemaan*' (p.15): "It is firm and certain belief, and complete acknowledgement of everything which Allaah and His Messenger have commanded (us) to have Faith in, and to submit outwardly and inwardly. So it is: Affirmation of the heart and its firm belief, which comprises the actions of the heart and the actions of the body. So this covers establishment of the whole of the Religion.

Therefore the *Imaams* and the *Salaf* used to say: '*Eemaan* is speech of the heart and the tongue; and action of the heart, the tongue, and the limbs.' And it is speech, action, and belief; it increases through obedience, and decreases through disobedience." [transl.]

(ii)

﴿ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾

Meaning: "All praise is for Allaah: the Lord and Nurturer of the whole of creation."

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ

*Alhamdulillah* is to praise Allaah for His Perfect attributes and His actions which result from His Favour or His Justice. So complete and unrestricted praise is due to Him, from all aspects.

رَبِّ

'*Ar-Rabb*' is the (Lord) who nurtures all of the creation (*al-`aalameen*): which means everything besides Allaah. This is by His creating them, His preparing for them everything which they need, and His showering tremendous blessings upon them: blessings which are such that if they lacked them, they would not be able to remain in existence. So whatever blessing is found with them, then it is from Allaah, the Most High.

Then Allaah, the Most High's nurturing (*tarbiyyah*) of His creation is of two kinds: the general and the particular. So the general is: His creating all of the creation, and His providing them with provision, and His guiding them to that which is beneficial for them - to whatever enables them to persist in this world.

Whereas the particular is: His nurturing His beloved servants. He nurtures them with true faith (*Eemaan*), He grants them its attainment, He perfects them, He repels calamities from them,

and He removes any impediments lying between them and Him. Its reality is the nourishment of His guiding them to everything good and His protecting them from every evil.

So perhaps this meaning is the reason why most of the supplications of the Prophets contain the wording '*ar-Rabb*', since everything they seek is covered by His nurturing in its particular sense.

So His Saying:

رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Meaning: "The Lord and Nurturer of the whole of the creation", proves that He alone is the One who creates and controls and sends blessings; and that He is perfect in His Self-Sufficiency, and that all of the creation are in total need of Him – in every sense and every respect.

(iii)

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ﴾

Meaning: "The Extremely Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The author, may Allaah have mercy upon him, did not add anything in explanation of this *Aayah*, speech about it having preceded in *Aayah* 1. Al-Qurtubee comments upon this *Aayah*: "He, the Most High, after describing Himself as '*Rabbul-Aalameen*' (the Lord and Nurturer of the whole of creation), then describes Himself as '*ar-Rahmaan, ar-Raheem*' (the Extremely Merciful, the One Who bestows His Mercy) because His describing Himself as the Lord of all the creation contains an incitement for them to have fear; so He then adds to it that He is the Extremely Merciful and the One who bestows

(iv)

﴿ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴾

Meaning: “The Sovereign of the Day of Requital.”

The ‘Maalik’ (Sovereign) is the One having the attributes of Sovereignty/Kingship – from the effects of which is that He commands and forbids, rewards and punishes, and has the full authority to act and deal with His servants, and to act with all the characteristics of Sovereignty on the Day of Requital – and that is the Day of Resurrection: the Day when the people will be repaid for their actions – the good and the evil of them. So on that Day the Perfection of His Sovereignty, Justice and Wisdom will become fully manifest to the creation. On that Day any authority or ownership possessed by the creation will have been taken away, such that kings and subjects, slaves and freemen will be equal: all of them will submit to His tremendous Majesty and will be humbled and subdued before His Glory and Might, awaiting His Reckoning; hoping for His reward, fearing His punishment. This is why He is mentioned as the Sovereign of that Day in particular, even though He is the Sovereign of that Day and every other day as well.

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His Mercy – since it contains hope and encouragement for them. Therefore in mentioning His attributes He combines incitement for them to have both fear of Him, and hope and a desire for Him. This will assist them to obey Him and prevent them from disobeying Him...” [transl.]

(v)

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

Meaning: "You alone do we worship and Your aid alone do we seek."

Meaning: 'We single You out (O Allaah) with all worship and requests for aid.' Because when the particle receiving the action of the verb is given precedence in the sentence,<sup>6</sup> it indicates restriction, and so it is an affirmation of the ruling for the One mentioned and a denial of it for everyone besides Him.<sup>7</sup> So it is as if He says: we worship You, and we do not worship anything besides You; and we seek Your aid, and we do not seek aid from anyone besides You.

Also the mention of worship (*al-Ibaadah*), before the mention of seeking aid (*'al-Isti'aanah*), is a case of giving precedence to the general over the particular,<sup>8</sup> and shows the importance of giving precedence to the rights of (Allaah) the Most High over the rights of His servants.

As for worship (*al-Ibaadah*), then it is 'a comprehensive term including everything that Allaah loves and is pleased with, with regard to actions and sayings: both the apparent and the hidden.'

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<sup>6</sup> This is a point of Arabic grammar. Instead of 'Na'buduKA' (we worship You) and 'Nasta'eenu biKA' (we seek Your aid) there occurs: 'IyyaKA na'budu' (It is You that we worship) and 'IyyaKA nasta'een' (It is Your Aid that we seek). [transl.]

<sup>7</sup> i.e. That worship and seeking aid are to be directed to Allaah alone and to none besides Him.[transl.]

<sup>8</sup> Since seeking aid is one of the types of worship.

As for seeking aid (*'al-Isti`aanah'*), then it is to depend upon Allaah, the Most High, for the attainment of that which is beneficial and the warding off of that which causes harm, whilst trusting in Him for the achievement of that.

So establishment of the worship of Allaah, and seeking His aid, are the means for everlasting bliss and prosperity, and for salvation from all evils. There is no way to attain salvation except by fulfilling these two.

But worship will only be true worship if it is done in accordance with the example set by Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ), and is done with intention of seeking Allaah's Face.<sup>9</sup> So through these two factors it becomes worship.

Also the fact that seeking aid is mentioned along with worship, even though it enters within it, shows the great need the servant has for seeking the aid of Allaah, the Most High, in all his worship. Since if Allaah does not aid him, then he will not be able to attain the desired goal of doing that which Allaah commands and avoiding that which He forbids.

(vi)

﴿ أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴾

Meaning: "Guide us upon the Straight Path."

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<sup>9</sup> These being the two conditions necessary for the acceptance of any action of worship: (i) *'al-Ikhlāas'*: that it is done purely and sincerely for Allaah alone, and (ii) *'al-Mutaaba`ah'*: that it is done in the manner taught by Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ).

Meaning: Direct and guide us, and grant us attainment of the Straight Path; and it is the clear way that leads to Allaah, and to His Paradise; and it is to know the truth and to act upon it. So we ask: 'Guide us to the Path and guide us upon the Path.'

As for guidance to the Path, then it is to adhere to the Religion of Islaam and to abandon all other religions besides it.

As for guidance upon the way, then it comprehends guidance to all the details of the Religion, in knowledge and action.

So this supplication is one of the most comprehensive of supplications and one of the most beneficial for the servant. Therefore, it is obligatory that each person supplicates to Allaah with it in every *rak'ah* of his Prayer because of his great need for that.

(vii)

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٥٧﴾



Meaning: "The Path of those whom You have bestowed Favour upon; not (the path of) those upon whom is Your Anger, nor (the path of) those who are astray."

And this Straight Path is:

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

“The way of those whom You have bestowed Favour upon”<sup>10</sup>,  
from the Prophets, their true and sincere followers, the martyrs  
and the Righteous.

غَيْرِ

“Not” the way of

الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ

“those upon whom is Your Anger” those who know of the  
truth, but abandon it, such as the Jews and their like,

وَلَا

and “not” the way of

الضَّالِّينَ

“those who are astray” those who abandon the truth due to  
ignorance and misguidance, such as the Christians and their  
like.

So this *Soorah*, despite its brevity, comprises that which is not  
comprised in any other *Soorah* of the Qur’aan. It includes all of  
the three categories of *Tawheed*:

[i] ‘*Tawheedur-Ruboobiyyah*’ (*Tawheed* of Allaah with respect to  
His Lordship), and this is to be taken from His Saying:

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<sup>10</sup> ‘*Tafseer Ibn Abee Haatim*’:



﴿الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“The Lord who nurtures the whole of the creation.”

[ii] ‘*Tawheedul-Uloohiyyah*’ (*Tawheed* of Allaah with respect to His sole right to worship), and it is to single Allaah out with all worship, and it is to be taken from His saying:

إِيَّا

“Allaah”, and from His Saying:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

“You alone do we worship, and Your aid alone do we seek”

[iii] ‘*Tawheedul-Asmaa was-Sifaat*’ (*Tawheed* of Allaah with respect to His Names and Attributes), and it is to affirm for Allaah, the Most High, all those attributes of Perfection which He affirmed for Himself, and those which His Messenger affirmed for Him, without negating them in wording or meaning (*ta’teel*), without declaring anything from the creation to be the same as Allaah (*tamtheel*), and without declaring there to be any resemblance between the Creator and the creation (*tashbeeh*). This is indicated by the word

﴿الْحَمْدُ﴾

“All praise”, as has preceded.

It also contains affirmation of Prophethood, in His Saying:

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

“Guide us upon the Straight Path”, since this is not possible without the sending of Messengers.

It also contains affirmation of the requital of deeds, in His Saying:

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

“The Sovereign of the Day of Requital”, and that the requital will be just, since ‘*ad-Deen*’ (Requital) means ‘just requital’.

It also contains affirmation of Pre-Decree (*al-Qadr*), and that the servant is a doer of actions, in reality, contrary to the ‘*Qadariyyah*’<sup>11</sup> and the ‘*Jabariyyah*’<sup>12</sup>.

Indeed it contains a refutation of all the people of Innovation and misguidance, in His Saying:

أَهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

“Guide us upon the Straight Path”, since it means knowledge of the truth and action upon it, whereas every innovator and misguided person is in contradiction to this.

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<sup>11</sup> A deviant sect who deny that Allaah has pre-ordained the affairs. They declare that the servant creates his own actions and performs them without the Will and Decree of Allaah.

<sup>12</sup> A deviant sect who declare that the servants have no will of their own, and that they are compelled to perform their deeds, and that they are not in reality doers of their own actions.

It also comprises (*al-Ikhlaas*): making all of the Religion purely and sincerely for Allaah, the Most High, in worship, and in seeking aid, in His saying:

﴿إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ﴾

“You alone do we worship, and Your aid alone do we seek.”

So all praise is for Allaah, the Lord and Nurturer of the whole of the creation.