

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Friday Khutbah – 13/12/2013

Some of the meaning of *Surah al-Fatiha*

It had been reported in the Hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, that Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said to Ubayy ibn Ka'ab, may Allah be pleased with him: 'Would you like me to tell you which *surah* (of the Qur'an) that nothing like it was revealed in the *Torah*, *Injil* or *Zabur* or *Furqan*? He said: yes, O messenger of Allah!

Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said to him: 'How do you read in your *Salat*? He said: He read the Mother of the Qur'an (i.e. *Surah al-Fatiha*)

Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said: By the One in Whose Hand my soul is! Nothing like it was revealed in the *Torah*, *Injil*, *Zabur* or *Furqan*. It is the seven repeatedly recited verses and the great Qur'an which I was given."

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy upon him, said: 'Allah sent down one hundred and four books. He summed up the meanings of these books in the *Torah*, *Injil* and *Zabur*. He summed up the meanings of these three books in the Qur'an. He summed up the meanings of the Qur'an in *al-Mufasssal* and summed up the meanings of *al-Mufasssal* in *al-Fatiha*."

Surah al-Fatiha is a highly significant *Surah* in the Qur'an. Because it so important reading it in *Salat* was made one of the pillars of *Salat*. A Muslim repeats it in every *raka'at* of his *Salat* and reads it at least seventeen times a day.

It is therefore, important that every Muslim should endeavour to understand the *tafsir* of this *Surah* and its fine meanings. I said during last Friday *Khutba* that one of the things which brings about *Khushu'* in *Salat* is reflection on the meanings of what one reads of the Qur'an in his *Salat* and especially on *Surah al-Fatiha*.

This *Surah* is called *al-Fatiha*, meaning the Opening *Surah*, because it is the first *Surah* in the Qur'an and because it is read at the beginning of *Salat*. It is also called 'the seven repeatedly recited verses', and it is called Oum al-Qur'an or Oum *al-Kitab* because all the meanings of Qur'an are summed up in it. It is also called *Salat* because Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) said in Hadith *Qudsi*: (Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) said in the Hadith *Qudsi*: I have divided *Salat* between Me and My servant into two, and My servant will get what he asks for. When he says: *Al-hamdu-lil-Lahi Rabbil-'alameen*, Allah says: "My servant has praised Me. When he says: *Ar-Rahmanir-Raheem*, Allah says: My servant has commended Me. When he says: *Maliki yawmid-deen*, Allah says: My servant has glorified Me. When he says: *Iyyaka na'budu wa 'iyyaka nasta'een*, Allah says: this is between Me and My servant and My servant will have what he has asked for. When he says: *Ihdinas-siratal-Mustaqeem Siratal-ladhina 'an `amta `alayhim Ghayril-maghdubi `alayhim waladh-dhaaleen*, Allah says: This is for My servant, and My servant will have what he has asked for."

This *Surah* includes great meanings. It includes the three categories of *Tawheed*; *Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah* (Lordship.), *Tawheed al-Asma' was-Sifaat* and *Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah* also called *Tawheed al-Uboodiyyah*.

"*Al-hamdu-lil-Lahi Rabbil-'alameen*," this is *Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah* (Lordship.) "*Ar-Rahmanir-Raheem*, *Maliki yawmid-deen*" this is *Tawheed al-Asma' was-Sifaat*. "*Iyyaka na'budu wa 'iyyaka nasta'een*," this is *Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah* also called *Tawheed al-Uboodiyyah*.

It also included the two types of *du'a* (supplication) i.e. *du'a al-'Ibadah* which is praise of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*): in *Al-hamdu-lil-Lahi Rabbil-'alameen*. “*Ar-Rahmanir-Raheem, Maliki yawmid-deen*.”

And *du'a al-Mas'alah* (asking Allah for one's needs) is found in his words: *Ihdinas-siratal-Mustaqeem Siratal-ladhina 'an 'amta 'alayhim Ghayril-maghdubi 'alayhim waladh-dhaaleen*.

After praising Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*), commending and glorifying Him, one follows this with asking Him: *Iyyaka na'budu wa 'iyyaka nasta'een* – meaning You alone do we worship and You alone do we seek for help.

This is the perfect situation for asking i.e. to praise the one whom you want to ask and then ask Him for your needs and the needs of your brothers in faith.

The best thing a slave of Allah seeks from his Lord is assistance to worship Him and to attain His pleasure. This is what Rasulullah (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*) taught Mu'adh Ibn Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him. He said: (*salla Allahu alaihi wa sallam*): O Mu'adh! By Allah I love you! Do not forget to say at the end of every prayer: O Allah! Help me to remember You, to thank You and to worship You best!”

His words (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*): “*Ihdinas-siratal-Mustaqeem Siratal-ladhina 'an 'amta 'alayhim Ghayril-maghdubi 'alayhim waladh-dhaaleen*” means guide us to the straight path and enable us to continue on it. The straight path is the clear route leading to Allah's pleasure and His *Jannah*. This guidance to the straight path is represented in knowing the truth and acting according to it.

Since the Muslim's need for guidance is very strong and continuous at all times, Allah directed him to supplicate Him repeating this *du'a* at least seventeen times a day asking Allah to guide him to Iman and righteous deeds and to keep him away from the path of those who deserved the anger of Allah and those who went astray. Those who deserved the anger of Allah are those who knew the truth but did not act according to it. Those who went astray are those who missed the truth because of their ignorance and their *Bid'at* which Allah did not legislate.

Someone might say: How come that a Muslim asks Allah for guidance at all times in prayer and outside prayer? Is he not already guided?

The answer is: a believer is in need to ask for guidance in every moment of his/her life– he needs to ask Allah to make him firm on the path of guidance; holding fast to it, continuing on it and increasing in it. A lucky person is he who has been guided to ask Allah because Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) has guaranteed to answer the one who asks Him.

Since one who is seeking guidance to the straight path is seeking something which most people are avoiding and deviating from, and the companions on it are few, and since human beings by their nature feel loneliness when they have no companions or the companions are few in number, Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) drew the attention of the believers and reminded them that the companions on this path are those upon whom Allah has bestowed His Grace. They are the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous.

When the believer realises that these are his companions, he would not care about the opposition of those who deviate from the path of truth because they are the ones who are little in value although they are big in number.

One of the right acting predecessor said: “Adhere to the path of truth, and do not feel lonely because of the small number of those who are going along that path, and avoid the path of falsehood and don’t be deceived by the large number of the ruined ones.”