

## Surah SC

### Surah Al Faatiha (1)

#### **What are the main teachings of Surah Faatiha?**

The Holy Qur'an was revealed upon the prophet (s.a.w) as a means of guidance as Allah says that "it is a guidance for those who have Taqwa". All the chapters have their own lesson and teachings just like surah Faatiha, the first surah of the Qur'an.

The surah has been revealed in Macca and according to some it the Basmallah is not included in the surah but according to others it is. It is the first surah that has been revealed in one whole. It is a surah that has never been revealed before to any prophet except the last prophet of Islam (s.a.w). It has different names as Ruqya, Shifa and Umm Kitaab among others.

**The first verse** is the Basmallah that is "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful". In that verse it is a clear indication that we must always start whatever we do in the name of Allah. All actions of our lives must be done with the name of Allah. There is an indication of two attributes of Allah in "the Most Gracious" and "The most Merciful". The first "Ar Rahman" signifies that Allah is merciful over all His creatures and creations but the second Ar Rahim signifies that He will be Most Merciful in Akhirah towards those who will really need His forgiveness and help.

**The second verse** means "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds". Allah deserves praise not only because He is our Creator, Sustainer, Provider, Helper among others but because He deserves to be praised as such. Hamd (praise) takes place on the tongue and in the heart. It is also evident that we must recognise Allah being the Lord of the Worlds that is the Worlds of angels, mankind, jinns, animals and what we can see and what we can't see.

**The third verse** "The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful" allows us to know much more who is Allah through His attributes of Compassion, Glorious and Mercy. Allah's Compassion (rahmah) is paramount as it is for everyone. He is more Mercy (rahim) only for those who believe in Him.

**The fourth verse** is "Master of the Day of Judgement". The notion of master brings to our mind that when there is Master and the servants. The Master will be the judge on that day and we will be questionable. He will decide of what to do with us. Only His mercy can come to our help. It is the day the debts will fall due; 'deen' can be debts the debts we owe Allah. Allah will take us to account on this Day and the result will be either Jannah or Jahannam.

**The fifth verse** of the surah is "You do we worship and Your Help we see". In this we recognise Allah's place and we know we have to worship Him alone. Ibaadah whether it may be Fard, Wajib, Sunnah, Nawafil must be for Allah. It is also an indication that Allah alone can help us and we can seek refuge in Him. There is no polytheism and idol worshipping in Islam.

**The sixth verse** states to "Guide us to the Straight Way, the way of those on whom You have bestowed Your blessings not on those on whom there is anger nor on those who go astray. In this we know that guidance is in the hands of Allah. We are asking guidance from Him and our du'a are specific. We ask to show us the road taken by the Nabi'in (prophets), Siddiquin (ashab), Shu'adah (martyr) and swalihin (the righteous). At the same time we are asking help and protection against anyone who had your anger and who went astray like the Jews and the Christians respectively. We are asking for the middle way between too much and too little. Muslims pray Allah to guide them in every walk of life.

**Another important fact** is that the Surah is a way for the people to know how to frame a du'a and how to invoke Allah with success. We have to praise Allah first, then we have to ask Him for guidance and lastly

we have to ask for protection against any group which obtained the anger of Allah and those who went astray. It is the prayer of the Believer.

**Another fact** is that we became acquainted with Allah's characteristics and we acknowledge our weaknesses. Allah is the one to be praised and we are the servants.

### **Explain why this Surah is regarded as so important?**

All verses of the Qur'an are important for the Muslim communities for all generations. As such, surah Faatiha is important for the Muslims in different ways.

**Firstly**, the Prophet (s.a.w) called it umm ul kitaab that is the essence of the Book because it contains the fundamental principles of Islam that is Tawhid (oneness of Allah), Risaalah (messengership of the prophet) and Insaan (Human Being) who are dependent on it.

**Secondly**, it is known as the "opener" as it opens up the book. It is also called as surah al hamd that is the surah of praise. Allah has mentioned it in the Qur'an by the "7 oft-repeated verses" which is a perfect prayer for Muslims in public or private.

**Thirdly**, there is no rakah in salat which is correct or complete without reciting the surah. It is one of the earliest revelations received in Mecca and the first one revealed in its entirety. This is at the core of the obligatory and non-obligatory prayers for all Muslims.

**Fourthly**, as it begins with 'bismillah' it shows that every action a Muslim does must start with Allah's name. It is said in hadith that if the name of Allah is not taken at the start of a work, then satan will accompany the person in the task.

**Fifthly**, this surah is suggestive of a prayer from the supplicant and the guidance in the remaining surahs of the Qur'an is the answer to that prayer. In the surah the last part deals with the du'a or invocation of the believer in quest of guidance from Allah. It can serve as a model to make du'a.

**Sixthly**, it is a constant reminder and warning of the Day of Judgement and man's accountability in front of Allah. When Allah affirms that He is the Master or Owner of that day, this means that He will be the One to decide whom He likes to enter paradise.

**Seventhly**, it is mentioned in hadith concerning the benefits of its recitation. It is said that if it is recited it can act as a healing (Shifa) or as enlightenment to a difficulty. It can be read and can be blown on the painful part of the body or in water for drinking purposes. However, it must be read with Iman.

**Eighthly**, it is recited after a person dies to invoke mercy on the soul. The reading of the verses of the Qur'an followed by du'a for anyone alive or dead is considered blessed by the scholars. The blessings found in the verses of the Qur'an are of utmost benefits for Mankind.

**Ninthly**, it reminds Muslims that Allah is the Compassionate/Gracious (ar Rahman) and the Merciful (ar Rahim). It is a constant reminder of where we stand in front of Allah. It reminds us of our inferiority in the sight of Allah and how we must be at His service.

**Tenthly**, it is also a clear indication that worship is for Allah alone and His help is paramount at any time. As such, it is used to drive away Jinn from a person as a Ruqya and it is used to protect oneself from the influence of Shaitaan. Allah is the One who can help us in such difficulty.

## Surah SC – ‘Alaq (96)

### **Describe what is taught in the verses (1 to 5) of Surah Alaq.**

It is said and narrated that the prophet of Islam (s.a.w) spent many years in the cave of Hira searching and trying to know who is Allah. Finally at the age of 40 it is narrated in Hadith that the archangel Jibril (as) came to him in his real form with revelation.

The first five verses of surah al ‘Alaq was revealed upon the prophet (s.a.w) in the cave of Hira in the month of Ramadhan in a night known as Lailatul Qadr. In these five verses there are lessons for all Muslims who consider Islam as their religion and Allah as their Lord.

In the **first** verse of the surah Allah ordered Jibril to tell the prophet to say “Read, in the name of your Lord who created”. In it there is the first command from Allah to read. By “read” it is an order to proclaim the message of Allah and to spread it. It also means to learn and to study as the implication of to read is to know how to read, that is to be literate. It also means to ‘read’, ‘recite’, ‘proclaim aloud’ without any limit. There is also an indication that we must always start by the name of our Lord that is Allah. Whatever we do or we are engaged in we must take the name of Allah. According to the prophet, if the name of Allah is omitted, satan will accompany the person in his task. There is also an indication that Allah is the Creator. But this aspect is better described in verse 2.

In the **second** verse Allah says that He “Created man, out of a mere clot of congealed blood”. There is the evidence and proof that it is Allah who is our Creator. He has moulded Insaan in the best way. It negates the idea of polytheism considering other gods as creators of human beings, animals, plants and all creatures. In it there is an indication 14 centuries ago that Man has been created out of a congealed blood that is the sperm. It indicates life is an act of Divine Creation. Allah has endowed man with Spiritual and intellectual potential.

In the **third** verse Allah says to “Read! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful”. Here we have another command from Allah concerning reading. This indicates emphasis being put on education and its worthiness. Another important idea here is that Allah is the most Bountiful meaning that He is the One who gives us everything that we need. It is also an invitation to reflect on everything Allah does for us because Allah blesses us with so much in every way.

In the **fourth** verse Allah says that “He who taught (the use of) the Pen”. Here again another aspect related to the Pen is as a symbol for the art of writing. It is an encouragement for Muslims to embark in the field of education and as such Allah has given man the unique ability to record and transmit knowledge. The only simplest way that is easy for Mankind to know Allah and what He wills from us is through the use of the Pen. Allah sent His knowledge through His prophets who in turn elaborated their scriptures to us.

In the **fifth** verse, Allah says that He “Taught man that which he knew not”. This is an indication that the knowledge of Man is either low or insignificant compared to Allah. As Allah taught prophet Adam the names of things presented to him, Allah teaches new knowledge to human beings at every given moment. He is the One who gives education to the whole humanity at large and man is utterly dependent on Allah for knowledge.

### **Why are these verses particularly important?**

All verses from the holy Qur’an have their own importance. Nothing has been revealed from Allah in vain. Concerning surah al ‘Alaq, it is important due to the fact that these were the first verses revealed to Prophet Muhammad. It was the start of wahy upon the prophet and at the same time the start of guidance.

**Secondly**, its importance lies in the fact that though the prophet (s.a.w) was unlettered and unable to read, Jibril (as) was sent to him in the cave of Hira by Allah. This means that when Allah wishes guidance to someone it is not because of his level of knowledge and education but because of the purity of his heart.

**Thirdly**, these verses were important as the prophet (s.a.w) was called to receive and understand Allah's message. He was thus ordered to convey it to everyone in the best possible way that is through wisdom.

**Fourthly**, through this surah there is a clear indication which stresses the simplicity of man's origins that is from a congealed blood. At the same time it shows that man is capable of reaching intellectual and spiritual potential.

**Fifthly**, there is enough sign to emphasis on the importance of that night as Lailatul Qadr and how Muslims are reminded that all knowledge comes from Allah. These verses are important to Muslims as they increase our faith in Allah and at the same time showing our weaknesses.

**Another important point** is that it shows Mankind the importance of education. It is only through it that one may be successful in this world and the next. By education here means both academic and religion but reading the Qur'an, proclaiming the Lord's words and praising Him is the way towards Him.

**These verses are important** as they consolidate our Iman in Allah as being our Creator. In this present world where science is taking over the time and thought of our youngsters, it is good to have a background of faith in Allah as our Creator. There are so many questions related to the authenticity and existence of Allah. This surah can help.

**These verses are important** as they remind us that we must be grateful to our Lord as He is the one who is the Most Bountiful. We are obliged to be at His service for whatever He has and is doing for us.

**This surah is important** as it sets the limits of Man. It is obvious that we were born illiterate and it is Allah who has given us that opportunity to become literate. As such literacy lies in the hands of Allah as He is the One who has taught with the Pen. Allah encompasses all knowledge and there must not be any pride on our part for our knowledge.

**Surah al 'Alaq is important** due to the fact that it presents to the Muslims various lessons to be successful in this world and the Next. All commands from Allah are meant for success. The mere fact of commanding Muslims to start in the name of Allah or to recite the praise of Allah or to cite His name silently or loudly is a way towards success.

### Surah Al Quraish (106)

#### **What message does Surah Quraish convey to the people of Mecca?**

This surah was revealed in Macca and was considered as a way to sensitise the Quraish on the fact that they should be grateful to Allah. One of the ways to do so was to adore Allah and worship Him.

In this surah Allah says as the first verse 'for the covenants [of safeguard and security enjoyed] of the Quraish'. Allah has started this surah with one of His favours that is to what extent He had bestowed His blessings upon the Arabs of Hijaz as a means of safety. Allah had protected them in their trips and voyages. This is a way to remind them that Allah has helped them and that they are on this earth to praise Allah.

In the second verse Allah says that ‘their covenants [covering] journeys by winter and summer’. As such Allah protected them in winter against cold and loss and in summer against looting from the Bedouins and the hard sun. So His protection extended the whole year.

That was why in the third verse Allah ordered them as grateful people to ‘let them adore the Lord of this House’. Directives are obvious and clear to worship Allah. Ibaadah is only for Allah. It is our duty to go to Saudi to the house of Allah, if we have the means or else we can worship Allah wherever we want.

In the next verse, Allah says ‘who provides them with food against hunger and with security against fear [of danger]’. Allah is the provider of all worlds. He is the One responsible to feed His Ummah.

In brief, the message from Allah to the Quraish was clear that they should worship Him and be grateful to Him. They are also indirectly invited by Allah to enter the fold of Islam and to accept what the Prophet was telling them. This surah was revealed in Mecca when Meccans were against the Prophet (s.a.w) and it is considered as continuation of the previous [surah Fil] relating to event in the year.

In that surah we learn that the Prophet was born in the Year of the Elephant 570 CE; and the Meccans reminded what happened then. Macca was under attack. Abraha came from the south and he led campaign against the Ka’ba in Mecca. It is said that due to the presence of elephants which were in his army the name of al Fi’l was given.

In surah Quraish, the latter were custodians of the Ka’ba. They offered no defence to this strong army but nevertheless the Quraish were protected. The Meccans were saved by a miracle. Stones were thrown by flocks of birds/insects which gave rise to dangerous infection/diseases in Abraha’s army. They thus retreated.

### **Surah Kawthar (108)**

#### **Describe what you know and understand about Sura Kawthar**

All the surah that have been revealed in the Qur’an are for specific reasons to help Mankind. Among them we have surah al Kawthar which was one of the Maccan surah. It was a direct message to the prophet (s.a.w) and to his enemy.

Allah starts by saying ‘To you we have granted the fountain of Abundance; therefore to thy Lord turn in prayer and sacrifice; for he who hates thee, he will be cut off [from future hope]’. In these verses there are many lessons to derive. The Meccans felt that the Prophet was helpless as his infant sons had died. That was his 3<sup>rd</sup> son known as Ibrahim who passed away in infancy. So they started to call him ‘al abtar’ meaning ‘someone who had no male heir’. They wanted to say that the prophet would not have any one to continue his name and he would not be remembered. However this surah was revealed to console the Prophet in this situation and to give him glad tidings of ‘al Kawthar’. The word ‘al Kawthar’ may have many meanings and all of them can be applied to the prophet. All the blessings and favours found therein for our Nabi are in abundance. Al Kawthar can also mean grace and knowledge, mercy and goodness, spiritual power and insight. Some scholars have suggested ‘victories’ that came later like in the Conquest of Macca. It was a clear indication that success would be very near. It is also proven that the best and choicest of abundance of favours is reserved for the prophet (s.a.w).

In the second verse Allah commanded the Prophet to pray and sacrifice as “So pray to your Lord and sacrifice”. It is an indication that we must always worship Allah in whatever condition we may find ourselves and at the same time we must always sacrifice whatever we have as money, time, resource, energy and being in the way of Allah. Ibaadah and sacrifice are for Allah. The prophet (s.a.w) had done it throughout his whole life. Lessons should be taken from our prophet. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse Allah reassured the prophet (s.a.w) about those who hated him and said wrong things against him. Allah says ‘No doubt your enemy he will be cut off’. There were those pagans who criticised the prophet as being an ‘abtar’ that is

someone deprived of male children. Then Allah revealed that surah to support the prophet. But in fact the prophet's enemies would be the losers and were the ones who were forgotten. It is a clear evidence that the name which is more frequently used and popular is 'Muhammad' and 'Ahmad'. As such in the words of this surah Muslims recognise that Allah's promise came true; the Prophet is remembered by his spiritual offspring and descendant. He is remembered through his natural progeny from his daughter Fatima (ra). However, he is also remembered by the Muslim community [Ummah]. According to some Hadith al Kawthar is understood as a heavenly fountain that quenches the highest spiritual thirst of man. This surah in some degree, consoles all men and women [who are sincere Muslims] to continue to do good works, be kind towards all living beings and thus attain inner peace and dignity.

### Surah Al Ikhlāas (112)

#### **Give the background and main teachings of Sura Ikhlāas.**

There are 114 surah in the Holy Qur'an and all of them have been revealed for specific purposes. Each one of them contains teachings and lessons for Mankind to be put into practice. As such Surah Ikhlāas is very useful for Mankind.

Surah Al Ikhlāas has been revealed to the last prophet of Islam (s.a.w) and it is one of the earliest Meccan Surahs. According to the scholars of Islam, the surah was revealed as a response to the unbelievers. According to Ibn Abbas, the people of Quraysh asked the Prophet (pbuh): "O Muhammad! Describe for us your Lord; is He made of gold or silver?" And so Allah revealed this surah to describe His attributes and traits, saying: say to Quraysh, O Muhammad: He is Allah, the One, He has no son or partner." The surah proclaims the fundamental Muslims belief that is Tawhid. It is the describing of Allah as the Eternal. The words Absolute, Primary Cause (as Samad), have been used in a unique way to this passage. The Prophet described this Sura as one third of the Qur'an as it speaks on Allah being one third of the Qur'anic passages. The surah was revealed as a reply to the questions set by the Quraish about the ancestry of Allah. It also rejected the prevailing polytheism of the Quraish and shirk is a grave sin in Islam. This Sura rejects the belief that Allah has a son.

There are many teachings in such surah. **Firstly**, when Allah orders us to say that Allah is One, it explains the essence of Allah as Unique. No one can be like Him. He is One in Being, in Attributes, in Action and in Worship. It is also an indication that the name of the Lord of the prophet and our Lord is Allah. **Secondly**, when Allah is saying that "Allah is Eternal", this means that He is without beginning and without end. There is no entrance and no exit. He was, he is and will always be. His eternity is absolute. Nothing can change or alter Him. He is not affected by time and space. He does not eat and drink like we do and He is eternally with and near His servants. **Thirdly**, when Allah says that "He begets not" this means that He can't be compared to women and He has no heir, no son, no daughter, no descendant, no offspring and no one to inherit what He has. **Fourthly**, when He says that "And He is not begotten" this means that He has neither father nor mother or any ancestors. He did not inherit this whole world from anyone. He has everything at His disposal. **Fifthly**, when Allah says that "None is like unto Him", this means that in all domains He is superior and no one will dare challenge it. Allah is unique, there is nothing that could be compared to Him in any way

#### **What does Surah Ikhlāas tell us about Muslim belief in Allah?**

Surah Al Ikhlāas is mainly on the topic and theme of Allah. This surah tells us about how we as Muslims must believe in Allah. **Firstly**, the prophet (s.a.w) said that if someone recites surah Ikhlāas once, he will have the blessings of reading one third of the Qur'an. This is so because one third of the Qur'an deals with the theme Allah. If one third of the Qur'an deals with Allah and it has been compressed in only 4 lines of Surah Ikhlāas, this means that the essence of Allah is beyond the range of our limited

comprehension. This surah is understood as the essence of the Qur'an. This surah has identified that Allah is unique in attribute, action, being and worship through the words like "Ahad" meaning that He has no equal in attribute, "Swamad" meaning that He has recourse to Himself for anything in action, "He begets not nor is He begotten" meaning that His being is unique and the notion of "No one is like Him" means no one deserves worship and praise as a Lord. **Secondly**, this surah explains the whole concept of Tawhid that is the Unity of Allah. The Lord is the Only Being worthy of worship compared to the polytheists of Macca. The idea of the surah is to negate anyone and anything as partner with Allah. Muslims must know that Ibaadah is only meant to Him. All our Takbir, Qiyam, Tilaawat, Ruku', Sajdah, Jalsa and Qa'dah are only for Allah. He is the only One deserved to be adored as our Master and Lord.

**Thirdly**, it is said in that surah that Allah is Eternal. By this it refers to Allah as without a beginning or an end. Allah is not limited by time or space. He will never grow old. He is not taken up by stress, illness, hunger, thirst, laziness and many of our characteristics. All persons and things are the ones dependent on Him. He are the ones to need Him. He is dependent on no one. Our own Ibaadah will cause Him any good. He doesn't need us. But we need Him. **Fourthly**, Muslims must not think of Allah as having a son or a father. Our Lord is deprived of ancestors and descendants. He has not inherited anything from anyone and He doesn't have heir or heirs to share His wealth as the concepts of pre Islamic Arabs. The whole concepts of to have babies or to be babies or to be parents or to be children are not applied to Allah. He is above any of these critics. **Fifthly**, Allah is Unique and no one is equal or similar or comparable to Him. We won't be able to imagine or sketch how Allah is, what He is doing, where He is, how He looks like or be able to do what He does or to be what He is. Allah is above all aspects of our miserable life and above what we may think. No one can dare saying that he is like Allah. This will tantamount to sins. When it is said that no one is like Him, this also refers that Allah can't have a bodily shape of any human part as some people advocate. As such, the surah tells and gives us a good lesson of how we must believe in Allah.

### **Surah Naas (114)**

#### **Teachings of Surah Naas**

The surah An-Naas has been revealed along with surah al falaq, Allah says: In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Say: "I seek refuge with the Lord of An-Nas,") (2. "The King of An-Nas,") (3."The God of An-Nas,") (4. "From the evil of the whisperer who withdraws.") (5. "Who whispers in the breasts of An-Nas.") (6. "Of Jinn and An-Nas.")

These are three attributes from the attributes of the Lord, the Mighty and Majestic. They are lordship, sovereignty and divinity. Thus, He is the Lord of everything, the King of everything and the God of everything. All things are created by Him, owned by Him, and subservient to Him. Therefore, He commands whoever is seeking protection to seek refuge with the One Who has these attributes from the evil of the whisperer who withdraws. This (the whisperer) is the devil that is assigned to man. For verily, there is not any of the Children of Adam except that he has a companion that beautifies wicked deeds for him. This devil will go to any lengths to confuse and confound him. The only person who is safe is He Whom Allah protects. It is confirmed in the Sahih that he (the Prophet (s)) said, (There is not a single one of you except that his companion (a devil) has been assigned to him.) They (the Companions) said, "What about you, O Messenger of Allah" He replied, Yes. However, Allah has helped me against him and he has accepted Islam. Thus, he only commands me to do good.

It is also confirmed in the Two Sahih from Anas (ra), who reported the story of Safiyyah when she came to visit the Prophet (s) while he was performing I'tikaf, that he went out with her during the night to walk her back to her house. So, two men from the Ansar met him (on the way). When they saw the Prophet (s), they began walking swiftly. So, the Messenger of Allah (s) said, Slow down! This is Safiyyah bint Huyay! They said, "Glory be to Allah, O Messenger of Allah!" He said, Verily, Shaytan runs in the Son of Adam like the running of the blood. And verily, I feared that he might cast something into your hearts -- or he said

-- evil.) Sa'id bin Jubayr reported that Ibn `Abbas (ra) said concerning Allah's statement, "The whisperer (Al-Waswas) who withdraws." "The devil who is squatting (perched) upon the heart of the Son of Adam. So when he becomes absentminded and heedless he whispers. Then, when he remembers Allah he withdraws."

Shaytan is Al-Waswas. He blows into the heart of the Son of Adam when he is sad and when he is happy. But when he (man) remembers Allah, Shaytan withdraws." Al-`Awfi reported from Ibn `Abbas; (The whisperer.) "He is Shaytan. He whispers and then when he is obeyed, he withdraws." As for Allah's saying; (Who whispers in the breasts of An-Nas.) Is this specific for the Children of Adam as is apparent, or is it general, including both mankind and Jinns. There are two views concerning this. This is because they (the Jinns) are also included in the usage of the word An-Nas (the people) in most cases. Ibn Jarir said, "The phrase Rijalun min Al-Jinn (Men from the Jinns) has been used in reference to them, so it is not strange for the word An-Nas to be applied to them also."

Then Allah says, (Of Jinn and An-Nas.) Is this explanatory of Allah's statement, (Who whispers in the breasts of An-Nas.) Then, Allah explains this by saying, (Of Jinn and An-Nas.) This is supportive of the second view. It has also been said that Allah's saying, (Of Jinn and An-Nas) is an explanation of who is it that whispers into the breasts of mankind from the devils of mankind and Jinns. This is similar to Allah's saying, (And so We have appointed for every Prophet enemies -- Shayatin among mankind and Jinn, inspiring one another with adorned speech as a delusion.) (6:112) Imam Ahmad recorded that Ibn `Abbas said, "A man came to the Prophet and said, `O Messenger of Allah! Sometimes I say things to myself that I would rather fall from the sky than say (aloud openly). ' The Prophet said, (Allah is Most Great! Allah is Most Great! All praise is due to Allah Who sent his (Shaytan's) plot back as only a whisper.)" Abu Dawud and An-Nasa'i also recorded this Hadith.