

**“ihdinā aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaḳīm” (Guide us to the straight path)
Explained by Imam Ibn Uthaymeen**



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Explanation of Verse 5 of Sooratul Faatiha

الْمُسْتَقِيمِ الصِّرَاطِ أَهْدِنَا

ihdinā aṣ-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaḳīm

Guide us to the straight path.

"the path" (aṣ-Ṣirāṭ): Regarding this word, there are two permissible recitations, one with the Arabic letter س (sīn) as in السِّرَاط and another with the letter ص (ṣād) as it is here in the verse: الصِّرَاط . The meaning of aṣ-Ṣirāṭ is the way or path. The meaning of **"Guide us"** refers to the guidance of showing and directing to the right path as well as the guidance of

granting success. So, by reciting, "**Guide us to the straight path**", you are asking Allah for **beneficial knowledge** (which is the guidance of direction) and **righteous action**(which is the guidance of success in following the knowledge).

"straight" (al-Mustaqīm): This means the correct path with no crookedness or deviation.

Points of Benefit of al-Fātiḥah, Verse 5:

1. From the benefits we gain from this verse is the concept of mankind's resorting back to Allah. After requesting Allah's help in fulfilling his worship in the previous verse, mankind now asks Allah to guide them to the straight path. There must be sincerity solely to Allah in worship as indicated by the verse, "**You alone we worship**" and help must be sought in fulfilling and strengthening this worship as indicated by the verse, "**and from you alone we seek help**". Also, one must follow the Islamic legislation and this is indicated by the verse, "**Guide us to the straight path**" because the straight path is none other than the complete legislation with which the messenger (ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﺳﻠﻢ) has come with.

2. Another point from this verse is that the eloquence of the Qur'an is shown in that there is no preposition after "**Guide us**" in the Arabic text.

[TN: The author here refers to the original Arabic text. The verse would literally be translated as "Guide us the straight path" without the added English preposition "to."]

This point is made so that the verse would contain both types of seeking guidance: the guidance of knowledge and direction, and the guidance of success and action.

This first type is only the directing to and showing the straight path, and Allah guides all of mankind with this meaning of guidance as in his statement:

لِلنَّاسِ هُدًى الْقُرْآنُ فِيهِ أَنْزَلَ الَّذِي رَمَضَانَ شَهْرُ

The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was revealed (as) guidance for mankind. [Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:185]

The second type of guidance is the granting of success along with the first type of guidance and the following of the Islamic legislation as Allah (سد بحانه وت عال ى) :syas

لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ هُدًى فِيهِ رَيْبٌ لَا الْكِتَابُ ذَلِكَ

That is the book, wherein there is no doubt, a means of guidance for the *Muttaqīn* (those who are constantly and fearfully conscious of Allah). [Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:2]

This second type of guidance may not be achieved by some people as Allah says:

يَدَالُهُ عَلَى الْعَمَى فَاسْتَحَبُّوا فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ ثُمَّ دُؤُا وَأَمَّا

And as for (the people of) Thamūd, we guided them (i.e. showed them the right way), but they preferred blindness over guidance. [Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilat, 41:17]

Here, "**we guided them**" means: We made clear to them the truth and directed them to follow it but they chose not to accept the guidance.

3. Another benefit we get from this verse is that the "path" is of two types: one straight and all others crooked.

Whatever is in accordance with the truth, it is the straight path as Allah tells the prophet (عليه وسلم صلى الله) to say:

سَبِيلِهِ عَن بَكْم فَتَفَرَّقَ السُّبُلَ تَتَّبِعُوا وَلَا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ مُسْتَقِيمًا صِرَاطِي هَذَا وَأَنَّ

And this is my straight path so follow it and do not follow (other) paths for they will separate you away from his (Allah's) path. [Sūrah al-An'ām, 6:153] And anything that opposes the truth is a crooked path.

The Explanation of Verses 6 & 7 of Sooratul Faatiha

عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْعَمْتَ الَّذِينَ صِرَاطَ

Şirāṭ al-ladhīna an'amta 'alayhim

The path of those you bestowed grace upon

الضَّالِّينَ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَغْضُوبِ غَيْرَ

ghayri al-Maghdūbi 'alayhim wa lā aḍ-Ḍālīn

Not of those who earned anger upon themselves, nor of those who are astray.

"The path of those you bestowed grace upon" (Şirāṭ al-ladhīna An'amta 'alayhim):

This verse is connected to the previous verse and provides further clarification of "the straight path".

"those you bestowed grace upon" (al-ladhīna an'amta 'alayhim):

They are the same ones mentioned in the statement of Allah in another part of the Qur'an:

كَأُولِيٍّ وَحَسَنَ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ النَّبِيِّينَ مَنْ عَلَيْهِمُ اللَّهُ أَنْعَمَ الَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فَأُولَئِكَ وَالرَّسُولَ اللَّهُ يُطِيعُ وَمَنْ
ارْفِيقَ

And whoever obeys Allah and the messenger, then they will be with those Allah bestowed grace upon of the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous. And what excellent companions they are! [Sūrah an-Nisā, 4:69]

"Not of those who earned anger upon themselves" (ghayri al-Maghḍūbi 'alayhim): Such as the followers of Judaism and anyone else who knows the truth yet refuses to act according to it.

"nor of those who are astray" (wa lā aḍ-Ḍālīn): Such as the Christians before the mission of the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) began. It also refers to anyone who works contrary to the truth, choosing to remain ignorant of it.

Regarding the word "upon them" ('alayhim), it has two acceptable recitations from the seven forms: one is with a (ḍammah) on the letter هُ (hā) making the reading عَلَيْهِمْ ('alayhum) and the other reading is the common one with a (kasrah) on the هِ (hā) which is read as عَلَيْهِم ('alayhim).

It is important to know that any different form of recitation that is not within the copies of the Qur'an that most people have, this different recitation, even though it is permissible, should not be read among common people who may not be aware of the different ways of reciting. This is due to three reasons:

1. Even the common people, although unaware of the different forms of recitation, consider this Qur'an to be something amazing and honorable. Their hearts are filled with its greatness and respect for it. If they began to hear it read sometimes one way and then other times a different way, then this may result in the Qur'an being lower with them from the high status it was once given. This is only because they are not aware of the various recitations and therefore cannot distinguish between them.

2. If someone recites with the different forms of recitation, he may be accused of making mistakes and not knowing how to recite. This is

because he recites in a way that is unknown to most people. So, this reader, even though may be correct, is then spoken about in a negative way amongst the majority of the people.

3. Even if a common person gives someone reciting in a different way the benefit of the doubt and believes that he knows what he recites, then such a person may begin to blindly follow the one reciting in the various ways of reading. So, perhaps he, the common person, may then mistakenly recite a way different from any of the permissible ways believing it to be one of the seven allowable recitations of the Qur'an. This would then be a form of distortion and corruption. For this reason, 'Alī (منع دلالا يضرر), one of the prophet's companions, said, **“Speak to people according to what they know, (otherwise) would you like that they (unknowingly) deny what Allah and his messenger say (because you confuse them)?”** [Recorded by al-Bukhārī as notes to another ḥadīth (no. 127)]

And Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه), another companion of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), said, **“You will never speak to any people with something that they cannot comprehend except that it will become a Fitnah (negative trial or tribulation) for some of them.”** [Recorded by Muslim (no. 14)]

And whenever 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb heard Hishām Ibn Ḥakīm recite a verse that he had never heard recited in that way before, he ('Umar) dragged him to the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and informed him of this. The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to Hishām:

أَقْرَ

Recite.

When he finished reading, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

أُنزِلَتْ هَكَذَا

It was revealed in this way.

Then the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) told 'Umar to recite and afterwards again said:

أُنزِلَتْ هَكَذَا

It was (also) revealed in this way.

[Recorded by al-Bukhārī (no. 4992) and Muslim (no. 818)]

The Qur'an was revealed in seven different dialects and the people used to recite in all of them until 'Uthmān gathered the people together upon one common recitation because they were beginning to differ and dispute over each other's recitations. He feared that the differences would become severe, dividing the people. So, he gathered them all together upon one recitation which was the dialect of the Quraysh tribe because the prophet (ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﺳﻠﻢ), upon whom the Qur'an was revealed, was sent from and among them. The other forms of recitation were somewhat forgotten by most people. So, if 'Umar (ﻩﻧﻊ ﻩﻟﻠﺎ ﻳﻀﺮﺭ) did what he did to another companion, then what about an ordinary person who hears you recite in a way different from the familiar copy of the Qur'an he has?

And thanks to Allah, the scholars have always been in agreement that it is not compulsory for people to recite in all the different permissible ways. If a person remains reciting upon one particular recitation, there is no problem with this. So, avoid problems and what could lead to them.

Points of Benefit of al-Fātiḥah, Verses 6 and 7:

1. From the benefits we gain from these two verses is the mentioning of specific descriptive details after a general description. This is from the verse, "**Guide us to the straight path**" – this is a general description and "**The path of those you bestowed grace upon**" is a more specific and detailed description of the path.

The benefit in mentioning something general and then afterwards more relevant details is that when a person hears of something general that could benefit him, he might eagerly anticipate more details and a clearer explanation. Then, after becoming aware of the detailed descriptions, he is ready to accept them and anxiously hopes to obtain what is mentioned.

Another benefit is the explanation that the people upon whom Allah has bestowed his favors and grace, they are the same ones who are upon the straight path as a result of this grace.

2. Another point we learn from this verse is that the blessing of guidance, with which some people have been favored, is directly from Allah alone; it is a pure favor from Allah.

3. From the verse, we understand that all of mankind is of either one of three categories: those upon whom Allah has bestowed his grace, those

who have earned anger upon themselves, or those who are astray. Each of these categories has already been explained previously.

The ways leading away from the straight path are either **ignorance** or **arrogant disobedience**. The ones who were taken away from the straight path due to arrogance and disobedience, they are those who earned anger upon themselves and the head of this group are the followers of Judaism. The other group, those who have deviated from the straight path due to ignorance, they are any people who do not know the truth, the main ones among these being the Christians. However, this was their (the Christian's) situation before the advent of the last prophet, Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Now that the prophet's mission has been established and completed, they have known the truth but in spite of that, opposed it. So, they and the Jews both have become the same – all of them are those who have earned anger upon themselves (if they do not repent and accept Allah's religion).

4. These last two verses also illustrate the eloquence of the Qur'an in that the expression used to refer to those who have earned anger upon themselves, مَغْضُوبٌ (Maghdūb), is in the Arabic form (according to Arabic morphology) known as the مَفْعُولٌ (maf'ūl) – an Arabic conjugal form that indicates that the anger upon them has already begun and is continuously occurring from Allah and from his close allies.

5. Another point we learn from these verses is that the severest type of misguided group is placed first, then the next in severity. Allah mentioned those who earned anger upon themselves before those who are astray because the first are more severe in opposition to the truth than the ones astray and misguided. Opposing something while being fully aware of it is much harder to return from than opposing something simply because of being ignorant of it.

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