

Analytical Study of the Concept of *Tawhīd* and its Establishment in Surat al Fātiḥah

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Abstract

This study discusses the concept of *Tawhīd* through the meanings that appear to the contemplator of Surat al Fātiḥah. One of the many noble purposes of this Surah is to establish *Tawhīd* along with its practical applications, in the practice of its reciters. For this reason, Surat al Fātiḥah is granted a noble place in Islam, which a Muslim must recite in every rak'ah of Salat. First, the concept of *Tawhīd*, a cornerstone in developing a civilization, is discussed. Following this, the methods of establishing *Tawhīd* (praise, freedom, and succession) are examined. The article concludes that *Tawhīd* plays an essential role in building a civilization.

Keywords: *Tawhīd*, Surat al Fātiḥah, Purposes of Surat al Fātiḥah. Civilization

Introduction

Tawhīd in its ideology is inextricably linked to civilization, where beliefs constitute a powerful incentive in the development of the human civilization (Schweitzer, 1987). From this perspective, *Tawhīd* is a fundamental concept in Islam and upon which the wheel of Islamic civilization revolves around. It is a crucial factor for the attainment of a good life for mankind in this world and the next. *Tawhīd* compels man to uphold and establish the obligations and responsibilities that Allāh, the Almighty assigned upon him and to work within the realms of divine decree, which leads mankind towards the building of a balanced civilization that establishes the relationship between man and the universe harmoniously in a manner no other civilization could produce before it.

Surat al Fātiḥah addresses these meanings with the purpose of establishing the concept of *Tawhīd* in the life of a Muslim, so that it frees his mind, heart, and soul from worshiping anyone but Allāh, the Almighty. This great Surah aims to develop, through the teachings of the Qurān and its comprehensive meanings, a model of a righteous believer.

This study discusses the concept of *Tawḥīd* through the meanings that appear to the contemplator of Surat al Fātiḥah. One of the many noble purposes of this Surah is to establish *Tawḥīd* along with its practical applications, in the practice of its reciters. For this reason, Surat al Fātiḥah is granted a noble place in Islam, which a Muslim must recite in every rak'ah of ṣallāh.

In the following sections, the Concept of *Tawḥīd* as a cornerstone in developing a civilization is discussed. Following this, the mechanisms of developing *Tawḥīd* are examined.

1. Tawḥīd is a Cornerstone in the Building of a Civilization in the Holy Qurān.

Tawḥīd creates a vision of the universe, humanity, and mankind, and establishes the dimensions of the human role in the universe and this life. A number of these dimensions are imbedded in the shaping of necessary understandings for the effective role of mankind in this world, and the instilment of a motive for mankind to build and achieve for its continuum.

Tawḥīd gives an identity to Islamic civilization. It connects the various parts, refines each element of it and then purifies it so it emerges as a homogenous entity of Tawḥīd (Al-farūqi, 1992).

In contemporary and past history, our thinkers composed their thoughts regarding all fields that incorporated it, since they understood it to be the most crucial principle amongst other principles. The basis of Tawḥīd liberates the individual from all folklore, fantasies, and ideologies of other religions that enter this world. So, achieving freedom became complicated from the availing of such traditions and aptitudes and laws within civilization. Those who contemplate such a qualitative shift brought about by Tawḥīd in human life observe that the pre-Islamic society was filled of different value systems and ideologies that restrained mankind, his mind and ability to develop civilization until the light of Tawḥīd protruded where he recognized that God created and regulated this world and offered guidance and integrity for Man (Shalabi, 1970)

Promoting growth and prosperity was the effect man had when he had committed himself to it, despite it being one its requirements. As Islam spread, it transformed people from being inactive members of society to those pioneering civilization, only due to their sublime and superior understanding of this reality.

Consolidation of Tawḥīd in one's life, results only in a positive outcome, which initiates from his relationship with God, then his fellow people and the universe around him. He regains his self-esteem and sense of accomplishment when promoting this truth (of Tawḥīd).

2. The Greatest Purpose in Surat al Fātiḥah: *Tawḥīd*

Sūrah Al Fātiḥah is one of the greatest Sūrahs in the Qurān. Allāh (SWT) inscribed it as the opening of the Qurān for mankind regardless of their time, background, or living conditions. It is a message

that includes the essence of human succession on this Earth to perform the message of the Qurān and fulfill its purpose.

Because of the greatness of this Sūrah and its themes, it has been assigned several names. It has for example been named *Salat*, as reported in the factual statement of Allāh, the Almighty: “I have divided the prayer into two halves between me and My servant, and My servant will receive as he asks”. (Muslim, The Book of Prayers, Ḥadīth 775).

This meaning to Sūrah Al Fātiḥah has a special significance. It asserts the *Salat* is performed in the implementation of this Sūrah, in the contemplation of its meanings and applications. Indeed, the Prophet (PBUH) said: No prayer is accepted from those who do not read Umm-Al Kitaab", If anyone observes prayer in which he does not recite Umm Al Kitaab, It is deficient (Muslim, The Book of Prayers, Ḥadīth 776).

In this way, Sūrah Al Fātiḥah holds the keys to the relationship between mankind and their creator, Allāh (SWT). This relationship cannot be correct without the meanings and the subjects that this Sūrah addresses- of Tawḥīd and the submission to Allāh alone. One of the greatest objectives of this Sūrah is *Tawḥīd* and its appropriation in man's life and the life of the reciter of it. This is where this Sūrah attains its noble place in Islam.

While this Sūrah provides the reciter with the keys of supplication, and people differ in their level of understanding and expression, Allāh's mercy on his people is exemplified in his revelation of this Sūrah and others in the Holy Qurān, so that people may express, in comparable ways, their supplication, despite their differences. In this way, though everyone recites this Sūrah and pleads to Allāh (SWT), the distinction arises in intentions and the levels faith to Allāh (SWT), in addition to other forms of servitude to Allāh (SWT). This is an outcome not of the Sūrah itself, but in what Allāh chooses to bestow on his creations out of His grace (Ibn Rajab, n.d).

The Sūrah begins by stating the relationship between man and his creator, which like an oath of *Tawḥīd* that begins with praise and gratitude towards Allāh (SWT) for everything that He has created in this universe to our use. Building man's relationship with the life around him is one of frequent and consistent performance to administer the will of Allāh (SWT) by creating a positive impact on earth, and to serve Him within the niche of the universe. If this understanding is irresolute, the fruits of civilization will also depreciate, and it will remain weak in proportion to human effort.

The Lord's ordination of promoting development and prosperity on earth is absolute for the human race, regardless of the nature of their faith, belief or culture. Therefore, on this basis, the absolute harness of material is to be in the service of man without exception, and to be managed

by his hands to promote advancement on earth, to give the opportunity for all of creation to compete in accomplishing such a great task.

Material is utilized by man to facilitate his mission to shoulder the Lord's succession in developing the earth within the framework that all humans are merely slaves of Allāh (SWT), since the entire cosmos is in obedience to Allāh (SWT) besides those who reject Him, as confirmed by the Qur'an (17:44).

The Qur'an instructs us that all components of life were for the employment of man and they are not repressed for a specific nation, nor do they discriminate between them. They do, however, defy the illiterate and those who fail to discover it, regardless of their religion. Hence, the Qur'an accentuates the importance of contemplation in accordance to a clear defined methodology that reveals the reality of the universe and its principles.

The five senses are given an enormous responsibility, in its task to contemplate. This is to prepare it to counter the numerous influences that are spread everywhere, which allowed to be transmitted.

3. Methods of Developing *Tawhīd* in Surat al Fātiḥah: Praise

One of the greatest gifts in the dialogue of the Qurān, is its ability to strengthen meanings and values through its distinct selection in words and terminologies. Sūrah Al Fatiḥah is a model for this great Qurānic method, by which the values of satisfaction and reassurance are reinforced in various parts of the Sūrah.

Sūrah Al Fātiḥah is a Meccan Sūrah that was revealed after Sūrah al-Muddathir during a critical period for Islam before the first migration to *Abyssinia*. The perceptions regarding the declaration of Islam amongst non-believers varied widely; some expressed flattery and deceit, while others took were more harsh and violent. These perspectives continued to deny and disclaim the declaration and attempted consistently to fight against it (Darwaza,1980).

Meanwhile, the perception of *Quraish's* leaders persisted in denial, repudiation, and aggression with a few exceptions. In this way, the impact of the revelation remained limited, and the number and strength of Muslims remained insufficient in face of the hardships and challenges the Muslims faced.

Thus, the Sūrah began with praise to teach the Prophet (PBUH) and all believers in this book, that the exercise of praise is an absolute necessity in every case and circumstance, stressing its importance in the worship of Allāh, the Almighty. And while the Sūrah was revealed at a time when Muslims were facing hardships and troubles, it started with praise so that it may iterate that it is a continuous act of faith, not contingent on circumstances or feelings.

Building praise in one's soul away from the vicissitudes of life and circumstances and linking it to feelings of gratitude is one of the greatest means of developing *Tawhīd* and belief in Allāh's names and qualities. For He is the most merciful, knows the affairs of His creations, and is thus the most able to dispose, according to His wisdom, justice, and mercy.

In this way, the faith of a man in all of this prompts him to feel satisfied regardless of how challenging his conditions may become; protecting him from falling into pessimism and despair when a crisis befalls him. Therefore, Surat Al Fātiḥah was one of the early chapters of the Holy Qur'an to be revealed because of the urgent requirement of these benevolent meanings, while the Muslims were facing numerous challenges during the early days of the Islamic call.

For this, Sūrah Al Fātiḥah is one of the first chapters revealed in the Holy Qurān. It is also the only Sūrah that must be recited in every Rak'ah of every prayer, obligatory or sunnah. This corroborates the importance of this Sūrah, which is like an oath, between the Creator Allāh, and His creation. This oath is renewed and strengthened with the recitation of Sūrah Al Fātiḥah in every prayer, reminding man of the oath of Tawhīd, between him and His creator. This oath is also strengthened through man's constant awareness that Allāh is watching him, what leads him to praising God and asking for his help and guidance (Al-Biqā'i, 1987).

The contemplator of this great Surah, its meanings, and names, realizes its main focus; that oath which forms the start of a relationship between man and His creator. It is commonly known as *Al-Fātiḥah*, the literal meaning of this is 'The Opener', which in this context means the opening of the relationship between Allāh, the creator, and man. Hence its placement in the opening of the Qurān and the start of every *Salat*. This is the nature of the relationship between God and His creation; one that starts with praise to Allāh (SWT) and feeling his presence in every aspect of life. This relationship is adequately transpired in Al Baqa'I's words during in his referral to the objective of the Surah (Al-biqā'y, n.d.).

Al-ḥamdulillah is a universal expression that is comprehensive in its meaning, which combines meanings of appreciation, gratitude, and also of humbleness and humility between the hands of Allāh, The Almighty (Al-Māwirdi, n.d). *Al-ḥamdulillah* is not merely a word uttered by the tongues devoid of meanings and values. True praise begins with remembrance of all blessings. There is a vast difference between one who says: "Praise be to Allāh" as a mere word devoid of any thought or feeling, and another who says "Praise be to Allāh" from the depths of his heart, with the remembrance of all of the blessings Allāh (SWT) granted to him, realizing the impossibility of counting them all, let alone express due thanks and praise to its Giver. *Al-ḥamdu lillah* is a psychological state, that is felt and reflected in man's actions and behavior, and will not be fulfilled without a realization of all the blessings Allāh has showered upon us.

Here the meaning of *Al-Hamdulillah*, transforms from a mere word uttered by the tongue, to an act of worship which forms a pivot from which man's actions in life centers around, and a reflection of the meanings of pure *Tawhīd* to Allāh Almighty. A man who truly praises Allāh, the Almighty, would not withhold what God has bestowed upon him from others. He whom Allāh, the Almighty, has blessed with knowledge, and skills should share this with others; he whom Allāh, the Almighty, has blessed with wealth, fortune, and position, should employ these abilities in helping others generously and openhandedly. Ultimately, he becomes a real successor in this world and a constant state of gratitude for His blessings. Praise, then becomes a behavior and a reality that is actualized (Muslim, book 07, 2734).

The issue here then is not just a matter of uttering of words, but a feeling and reflection in behaviour that inspires gratitude and appreciation. The choice of the term *Rab*, or 'Lord', is most appropriate here for He is the One who nurtures and rectifies the affairs of his creation by the favours which He showers upon them. He controls the affairs of his creations and grants blessings; He is the One Who nurtures; He is the Creator and the Provider; He is the One Who aids and the One Who guides (Al-ṭabari, 1987). This is what that Surah aims to build in its reciters.

When man recognizes and internalizes that Allāh (SWT) purifies him from distress, hardship, fatigue, health and disease and grants him prosperity, he begins to understand Allāh's wisdom in His choices in all circumstances. When an individual realizes this, his perspective on life changes. His heart no longer becomes distracted with worries, anxiety and distresses. Instead every challenge he faces becomes a result of Allāh's choice and guidance.

And yet The Creator's giving might at times be accompanied with prevention and happiness and pleasure may be accompanied with grief. Such things that man may perceive to be dark and bad such as grief, these afflictions do not aim at harming him, rather they test him, the test his belief. These feelings of acceptance and praise can only be achieved when a person comprehends, that Allāh, The Almighty, desires the best for his creation, and knows best what is best for them. This essentially is what pushes the believer to constantly praise His Creator; motivating him to praise Him for everything, for all His grace, for all His blessings and for everything that He has given. This is the essence of what *Al Hamdulillah* denotes in Surat al Fātiḥah.

This divine guidance is founded on an essential meaning that is inherent to *Tawhīd Al-Uluhiyyah* (belief in the oneness of the worship), which is compassion for his creation, *Raḥmān-Raḥīm*. The link between *Rab il- 'ālamīn* (Lord of mankind, jinns and all that exists) and the *Al-raḥmān al-raḥīm* (All Merciful and Ever Merciful) clarifies the relationship between the Creator and His worshippers. Allāh, The Almighty who nurtures and guides his creation, is all knowing of their strengths and weaknesses, knowing of their circumstances, lives, and conditions. This gives

man the certainty that Allāh, The Al Mighty will never leave him nor abandon him, regardless of their level of difficulties and perpetual hardships.

From here, the meanings of healing appear in this Surah. First, Surat al Fātiḥah protects its reciter from the fears and horrors of life, transferring him to a world that is full of compassion and divine mercy. Subsequently, the soul calms down and the heart settles, embracing these meanings of reassurance and serenity away from sadness and despair that kills man's willpower and destroys his determination and paralyzes his strength.

Allāh, the Almighty, who has all authority in heaven and earth, treats His creation with kindness and compassion. These meanings reinforce a sense of reassurance and tranquility in the self, healing the soul from worldly fears and concerns, a soul that cannot find tranquility without conquering those feelings.

Freedom from such fears strengthens the meanings of *Tawhīd*, primarily, *Tawhīd al-iluhīyah*, as in, the unity of worship. In this way, the character this Surah builds, prevents submission except to Allāh, the Almighty. *Surat al ḥamd* liberates man and opens him to *Tawhīd al-iluhīyah*. One of the gifts is the reassurance that descends upon the heart of the believer when he understands that Allāh, the Most Merciful, holds the key to his life. Thus, his soul calms down, his inner self is soothed, and his heart is reassured.

The Surah then moves to another aspect that forms an essential part in a person's life; life's short journey. This is something that one should not forget amidst life's troubles and concerns. *Mālik yawm al-dīn* (Al Qurān 1:4). For this life is not the end of the journey, in truth, it is the start. This description of Allāh, The Almighty, for the day of judgement, *Mālik yawm al-dīn*, as one of the characteristics of Allāh, The Almighty, that nobody can claim or allege to himself.

4. Methods of Developing *Tawhīd* in Surat al Fātiḥah; Freedom

Tawhīd necessitates absolute submission and complete obedience to Allāh, which means liberating one's self from everything and all liabilities except. This reveals man's true freedom from all chains and restrictions that have long tied up his will, mind, body and spirit. *Tawhīd* entrusts man with highest levels of freedom, which are the most fundamental and most prominent mechanisms of building civilization.

Tawhīd alone is sufficient to rescue humanity from slavery (of societal and cultural expectations). It is the acknowledgment of Allāh, The Almighty, the Creator of everything, and His lordship and divinity. Resulting from this acknowledgment is the freedom from every power and dominance other than that of Allāh; physically and mentally in all aspects of life. *Tawhīd* with this purpose-oriented dimension frees man from submission to any other way of thinking that

keeps him away from the right path, starting from man's pursuit of his own whims and desires. Allāh (SWT) says in the Holy Qurān: (Al Qurān, 45:23; 12:39).

With such freedom, it becomes clear to the believer, the purpose of life and his existence in carrying the message of *Tawḥīd* and acting on those values by spreading goodness and kindness in the world. These meanings are clear to the eye of the reciter, especially in the verse: *Mālik yawm al-dīn* (4). One of the most profound characteristics of *Tawḥīd* is the certitude that Allāh, The Almighty, has in His possession the ability to do anything, as and when he so requires.

Supreme power belongs to Allāh, the Almighty, which is a divine power, predominance and absolute authority. Human beings, on the other hand, even when they appear to have a bit of power, have it only on a temporary basis. See for example how the power of Pharaoh ended (Al Qurān, 43:51).

The contemplation of these meanings results in freedom of the heart from any other worship besides Allāh, The Almighty, and frees man from fears and adherences of this life. The believer also becomes free from the perception that a person can be the sole cause of trouble or benefit, poverty or wealth, elevation or humiliation to him. He is thus freed from other matters to ensure the heart is connected to Allāh (SWT) alone with no one else. As a result, it builds *Tawḥīd* in the heart and limbs and rids a person from his fears and concerns, and then it nurtures him from his inner beliefs, and not from outside influences. *Tawḥīd* ascertained by Surat al Fātiḥah conclusively makes man free from within, from all restraints, restrictions, whims and passions that initially prevents his (intellectual) freedom.

Recitation of Surat al Fātiḥah along with its contemplation reminds its reciter of the value of freedom, it revives his spiritual capability and releases from all restrictions and constraints that is often further deepened by negligence (of it). Hence, freedom comes as a fruit of submission to Allāh and believing solely in Him as the only God worthy to be worshipped. Surat al Fātiḥah professes man's importance and his endeavor to attain his freedom through the doctrine of *Tawḥīd*, calling for the worship of Allāh (SWT), submission for Him and the negation of all forms of slavery. Moreover, the verse of: *Mālik yawm al-dīn*, gives one reassurance and tranquility in the feeling that even when his right is forcefully and coercively taken, it will return to him someday; if it is not returned in this world, it will be in the hereafter.

He who ponders over these meanings, recognizes the nature of the relationship inaugurated by the Surah between the God and his creation; a strong relationship that is not undermined by neither hardships nor difficulties. A relationship that is based on a genuine belief that Allāh, the Almighty, will support him- given that he follows His commands, is patient and just. On the other hand, those who do wrong and do not perform their rights, will be punished for their wrong doings.

Man may experience pain and pleasure, and in this way, there is nothing that will strengthen the relationship between man and his creator more than faith in His wisdom. Belief in the Day of Judgment also inspires hope and optimism, keeping the believer away from feelings of despair, frustration, and discontent towards the problems that may face him in life. Whoever is wronged or is afflicted from something he dislikes and has not been able to retain his right or to get justice for his affliction, will find the answer in this verse which opens the doors of hope and trust in Allāh (SWT) and His justice. Thus, his soul is calmed and settled.

Meanwhile, the Surah makes clear its interest in civilization regarding freedom from all that binds a Man from worshipping idols. In essence, there is no real civilization when its people submit to other humans or stones that have no real power.

One of the primary words in Surat al Fātiḥah that promotes freedom, is man's declaration in front of his Creator: *Iyāk na 'bud*. Here, the believer speaks to Allāh (SWT), believing that Allāh sees and hears Him, as the Prophet, Peace be Upon Him, said when describing the ranks of sincerity of worship, "Ihsan is to worship Allāh as if you see Him, and if you do not achieve this state of devotion, then (take it for granted that) Allāh sees you" (Al Bukhari, Book 65, Hadith 4777).

In this way, *Iyāk na 'bud* signifies that the heart trusts Allāh, asking none other than him. Worship is not an apparent submission or physical appearance but is also proceeded by submission and compliance of the heart with love and choice. Submission indicates full love along with full submission and humiliation towards Allāh (SWT), since submission without love is not called submission in the Islamic sense (ibn taymiyah, n.d).

Here, the great Surah establishes that worship is based on the love of the Creator, the Almighty, and submission to His order and decree. The verse *Iyāk na 'bud* indicates that worship is towards Him alone, not to anyone but to Him. One of the manifestations of freedom demonstrated in the Surah is that man becomes submissive to the command of Allāh (SWT) alone, and obedient to what pleases Him, even if it is contrary to his passion or desires. As a worshiper, he will abandon his own desires to do what Allāh (SWT) loves and wants. In this way, man neither worships Allāh for mere repetition of words nor to adhere to the customs of society.

Freedom cannot be achieved with submission to other than Allāh (SWT), the Al-Mighty, in anything that is contrary to the command of Allāh, the Al-Mighty. True submission is in conformity and obedience to the law of Allāh (SWT), the Almighty, and then subjecting everything else as secondary to that. Through that, a slave becomes free from all the impurities of polytheism, delusions, passions, ideas and thoughts and that is one of the greatest calibers of authentic freedom. Hence, Surat al Fātiḥah prepares the reciter to the next chapter of the Qurān , which incorporates orders, assignments and physical worships.

5. Methods of Developing *Tawhīd* in Surat al Fātiḥah: Succession

Al Fātiḥah is a Surah that establishes the relationship between God and His creator. A relationship that is based on the concept of succession. A person, in the Holy Qurān, is made successor on earth, and this is on the condition of the believer's liberation from other than *Tawhīd*. Accordingly, man will be questioned and held accountable for his choices.

Italian orientalist Laura Vecia Vaglieri (2004) recongized the role of Islam in defeating idolatry in all its forms, which played an important role in freeing people's concepts of the universe and of religion from the mutants that degraded such concepts. Humanity realized their high status when they began to say with Abraham (PBUH): *'I have turned my face toward He who created the heavens and the earth, inclining toward truth, and I am not of those who associate others with Allāh'* (al Qur'ān,6:79). So long as he has Allāh, he is no longer humiliated and seen as insignificant.

Liberty instills in the believer the willingness to exercise judgement without conforming to external whims and pressures. This is greatly emphasized in Surat al Fātiḥah through the purification of *Tawhīd* in the form of love, submission and humbleness to the Creator. Thus, it brings him out of the whims of the soul, blameworthy habits of parents and forefathers and the ideologies of human beings. He proclaims it time and time again: *Iyāk na'bud wa i'yyāk nasta'in*.

Human freedom in the Islamic vision is a social obligation and a divine mandate upon which the trust of responsibility and message of succession is established. It means that Allāh, The Almighty, places a man as a successor of the earth, representing all the divine purposes of creating him. Freedom is the permissibility that enables him to act according to his will in any terrain of action and with any kind of expression' (Amara, 1998).

However, the believer cannot attain it by himself without seeking the aid of his Creator, the Almighty. Allāh says in the continuation of the verse: *i'yyāk nasta'in*. Seeking help renews and deepens the understandings of *Tawhīd*. Exclusivity to Allāh (SWT) arrives in the verse *i'yyāk nasta'in*, as when he also states *Iyāk na'bud* to confirm the concept of *Tawhīd* and to ascertain the Creator, the Mighty, with worship. Ibn taymiyyah insisted that the knowledge of the Qurān is collected in Al Fātiḥah. (Ibn taymiyah, n.d). While Al-Suyūṭī argued that the knowledge of Al Fātiḥah is in worshipping Allāh and trusting him (Al-Suyūṭī, 1978).

The more the believer fathoms and employs such meanings, the more he gets promoted in the ranks of obedience in the eyes of his creator. In this way, the main objective of the Surah is to promote freedom, and to build a person who is conscious and able to hold the responsibility of succession and civilization.

The principle of succession in the earth starts through the succession of the role assigned to us. The essence of development is developing oneself, rather than the development of the external sources which would have been used to satisfy one's own needs. Succession is a moral development, which is aimed towards the composition of man. It is thus not a worldly act, which simply intends to improve human life on earth as much as possible, it is to empower humanity to convey goodness in deeds and speech, which is the crux of human testing. Good deeds are the practical depiction of *Tawhīd* and succession. If these meanings are embedded into the believer's soul, he is saved from misguidance and from the wrath of Allāh, The Almighty.

The following verse in Surat al Fātiḥah comes with a call that is coupled with supplication and prayer; *I'hdina al-ṣiraṭ al-mustaqim*. A request for guidance as the believer does not know the path, and hence, is another mechanism of advocating *Tawhīd* in one's soul. Because Allāh, The Almighty, is the one who guides, therefore, through Him is the only way that the believer earns the help of Allāh and may be guided to his straight path. Guidance is the greatest concern that is sought by any Muslim (Ibn Qayyim, 1996).

One of manifestations of the meanings and requirements of succession in Surat al Fātiḥah is the advent of the word "*Guide us*" in the plural; to make the person remember that, although he is an individual, he is still an individual within a group. Allāh, The Almighty, wants to cleanse that believer as he wants good deeds to be present for all (people) and to not be egotistical or narcissistic. Additionally, the mission of succession and civilization is not accomplished through individual efforts alone, it requires a collective effort that mobilizes all potential human effort to do their utmost to complete it in the best manner (Ibn 'arafa, 2008).

The Qur'an has considered mankind as one family to be involved in their obedience to Allāh, and to Adam's affiliation (al Qur'an, 4:1, 49:13). These all contribute to mobilizing and compiling human forces together in order to focus on a single goal. This in essence makes them more effective and more capable of innovating, creating and giving. This is what the following verse says: '*Show us the straight path*'. The straight path is clear. Allāh (SWT) did not leave man without signs, explanation and guidance to that path. Allāh (SWT) cleared the way, established the evidence, sent the messengers, calling to the straight path. It is a perfectly clear path. Mentioning the straight path, and the asking for guidance from Him in the surah enhances the necessity of conducting the process of civilizational linking to mankind with a certain cosmic vision, and with great cultural goals. These are different from the randomness and bemusement that people lived in the pre-Islamic era, and from which many people suffer with to this day.

Human effort should be clear and realistically planned and balanced, connected to the great goals of the Qur'an in building a great man advancing in a consistent and harmonious way, with all those who followed this approach before and after. This harmony and clarity of vision, which

is reinforced in Surat al Fātiḥah time after time during one's life, is what one needs when his vision is obscured. A Muslim's request for guidance is stressed in this Surah, reflecting the importance of having a clear vision and goal in this life and linking it to a result in the After-life.

Surat al Fātiḥah also builds an awareness of the intangible blessings surrounding mankind, which is an essential factor in the enactment of the mission of succession adequately. Here it is important to remember that true blessings are not confined to material gains and only exist to serve a purpose in the ultimate goal in this life; the straight path that helps man reach to Allāh (SWT).

From here, a number of Western thinkers have emphasized the role of this 'awareness' in the development of a civilization, citing on its absence in today's contemporary life. Toynbee (2003), for example, argues that humanity is suffocating from a crisis, not less in evil than the two world wars. He further mentions, the possibility of a man-made catastrophe that destroys space and destroys all humankind is very high (ibid). Man has increased his material strength to an extent that has made him a threat to the survival of the biological life. The main cure - in Toynbee's view - is spiritual, since every social institution is based on philosophy or religion, which could be good or bad according to the spiritual basis by which it is founded (ibid). Humanity needs a new spiritual foundation, and there are many voices that have emerged from all over our world, emphasizing the urgent need in our time for faith (ibid).

The Holy Qurān has negated the corrupt and dishonest practices of previous civilizations. They focused all their attention on their physical needs while giving little to their spiritual needs and human values (Al Ghadeer, 1992). The Holy Qurān had indicated in other verses in the Qurān that a focus on physical needs alone does not guide nations towards *Tawhīd*; the unification of Allāh, nor does it lead its people to succession and righteousness. Instead it becomes a reason for their ruin, diverting people's focus towards simple indulging in life's pleasures and desires, sometimes unjustly, for the sake of what in reality is temporary and short-lived.

From here, the definition of a 'blessing' in the context of guidance towards Allāh and the straight path, is confirmed in Surat al Fātiḥah as a reminder for people to walk on the path of righteousness and be careful not to divert from it.

From here, the mentioning of '*... not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray*' in the Surah provides direction to all what can divert mankind from the straight path, the path of Allāh, the Almighty. When man distances himself from the right path- from the path of *Tawhīd*, to a path of self-conflict and spiritual and intellectual confusion, it is then, that he incites Allāh, the Almighty's wrath. Man cannot effectively implement the meanings of *Tawhīd* and the unification of God reflected in the verse: '*It is You we worship and You we ask for help*', when he

has distanced himself from the right path. Here the Qurān gave special mention to the wrath of Allāh as a warning of the consequences of the deviation from what is right.

From this point, Surat al Fātiḥah was considered the greatest Surah in the Holy Qurān. The meanings and teachings presented in the Surah provide guidance for the worshiper to pursue the right path so that he becomes a worshiper worth of Allāh's guidance and mercy. With these meanings, Surat al Fātiḥah deserved to be the 'opener' of everything in life, for it is 'The Opener' of the Holy Qurān, which forms a guide to the life of the believer.

Conclusion

Thus far, the paper has addressed the concept of *Tawhīd* and the methods of its development through the contemplation of the verses of Surat al Fātiḥah. First, its pivotal place in the development of civilizations is highlighted. Here, the purpose of Surat al Fātiḥah in developing *Tawhīd* was discussed. *Tawhīd* guides mankind to perform all the duties that Allāh, the Almighty, had assigned to him, so that he may perform these tasks within the framework of the divine approach in a way that none of the previous civilizations could have achieved before. Further, *Tawhīd* outlines a comprehensive vision for the relationship between Allāh, the Almighty, and man, and between humanity and the universe; what reflects on the thinking and behavior of the worshiper in ways that influences his performance and objective in life.

The following sections discussed some of the methods of developing *Tawhīd*, namely, praise, freedom, and succession. *Praise* is not limited to verbal actions alone, it extends to feelings and actions. It enables man to undertake the responsibilities of succession. Following this, *freedom* as another prominent outcome of *Tawhīd* was examined. It was argued that this freedom that *Tawhīd* grants the believer, prevents him from a sense of obligation and submission towards anyone but Allāh. Finally, the concept of *succession*, which constitutes the moral development of human beings, was discussed. It was argued, that succession allows mankind to perform their obligations in the best form possible through doing good deeds as it represents the physical outcome of *Tawhīd* and *Succession*.

Surat al Fātiḥah, *The Opener*, is a Surah which reflects these crucial meanings of *Tawhīd*, as it frees the man's mind, heart, and soul, guiding him towards the right path, to the path of *Tawhīd*. In addition, it achieves the requirements of succession through the worship of Allāh alone. The believer in this way becomes a model which the holy Surat al Fātiḥah has prepares and educations through the teachings of the Holy Qurān.

From here the Surah has attained this important place in Islam, where it is the only Surah that must be recited in every Rak'ah of every prayer. A Surah that's meanings are strengthened and renewed in the mind of the believer through recitation and contemplation, reminding the believer of the

oath of Tawḥīd between him and His creator. This study concludes by advising its reader to develop these essential meanings and values through the contemplation of the Holy Qurān, which reveals many applications that in turn will have an important effect in advancing the life of humanity by effectively guiding their actions.

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