

# ADULT SPIRITUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

## *7 Practical Principles of life*

*FATIHA-THE OPENING*



BY UZMA SHARAF



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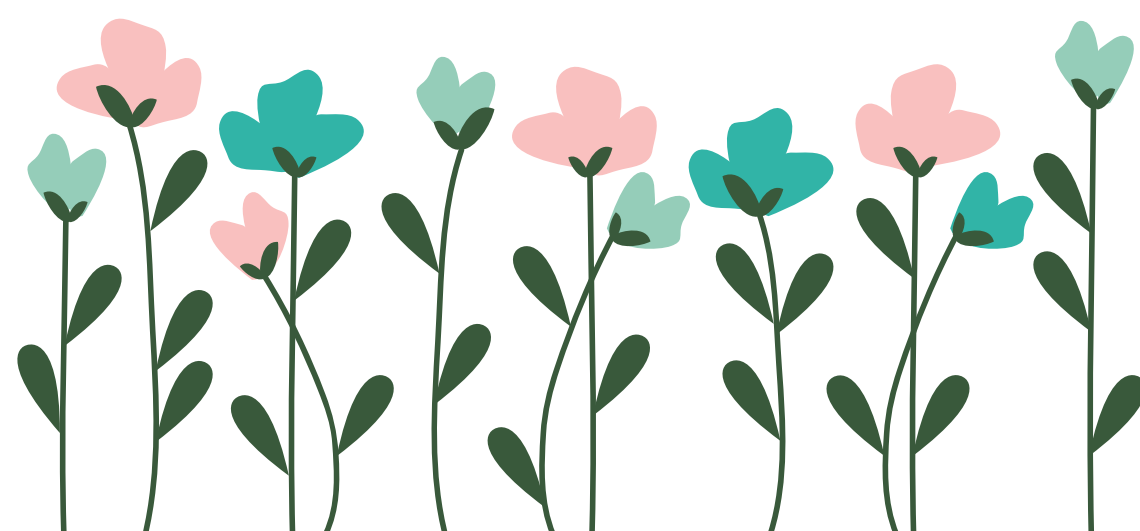
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## THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF LIFE

**"And We have bestowed upon thee the Seven Oft-repeated (verses) and the Grand Qur'an"**

The seven often repeated verses are important because they are in fact 7 principles of life. The life of a believer should be based on the following principles that serve as a foundation for faith.

- 1-The attitude of gratitude
- 2-Unconditional love and mercy
- 3-Accountability and personal responsibility.
- 4-Devotion to God
- 5- Seeking guidance
- 6- Reliance (Tawakul) on Allah
- 7- Seeking divine protection from misguidance.





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## OVERVIEW OF THE SURAH

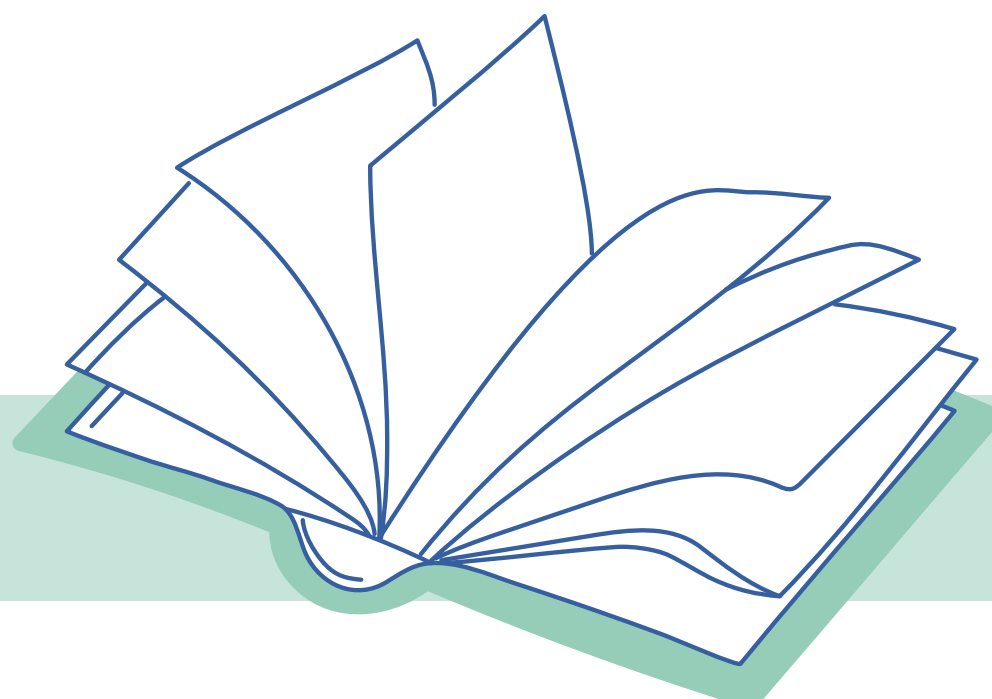
### DIVISION OF PASSAGES

#### Verse 1-4

- Praise of Allah.
- Acknowledging His mercy and compassion.
- Gratitude and reverence towards God.

#### Verse 4-7

- The distinction of general mercy and specific mercy.
- The distinction between human / divine attributes.
- Day of accountability & purpose of life.
- The concept of worship in Islam.
- Various form of worship.
- Reliance in Allah (Tawakul)
- Two paths: Path towards salvation & progress.  
Path of misery and misguidance.





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Surah Al-Fatihah

(The Opening)

No.1 (7 Verses)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِیْنَ  
الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
مَالِكِ یَوْمِ الدِّیْنِ  
اِیَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِیَّاكَ نَسْتَعِیْنُ  
اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِیْمَ  
صِرَاطَ الَّذِیْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَیْهِمْ غَیْرِ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَیْهِمْ وَلَا  
الضَّالِّیْنَ

1. "In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful."
2. All praise is for Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds."
3. "The Beneficent, The Merciful."
4. "Master of the Day of Judgement."
5. You alone do we worship and You alone do we seek help."
6. "Guide us (O' Lord) to the Straight Path."
7. The path of those who you have bestowed bounties, not (the path) of those you have inflicted with your wrath and gone astray.





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## THE VIRTUE OF STUDYING A SURAH

The reward of any Muslim who recites the Surah 'Opening', is like that of a person who has recited two-thirds of the Qur'an.

### LINGUISTIC MEANING

Al-Fatiha means "The Opening"

Fatihah-ul-Kitab,

Umm-ul-Kitab,

Umm-ul-Qur'an,

Sab'-ul-Mathani,

Al-Wafiyah,

Al-Kafiyah,

Ash-Shafiyah,

Al-Asas,

As-Salat,

Al-Hamd.





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## Explanation Verse 1-4

Verse 1:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful."

When we begin with the Name of Allah, we must seek His Mercy and compassion.

**Bismillah means We detach our heart from everything else but God.**

Bismillah- Is basically, asking Allah to bring (barakah) increase abundance & growth in every activity of life we involve in.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Al-Rehman and Al-Raheem (2 divine attributes)

**Divine Attribute: The most gracious and most merciful.**

الرَّحْمَنِ

AL-Rehman: The Beneficent, derive from the root word (rhm) Mercy. It is infinite, unconditional mercy that provides nourishment to all created being throughout the universe. It refers to **Universal Mercy** of Allah which is bestowed upon all his creatures; among them are the believers, nonbelievers, good and evil, Muslims /Non-muslims, atheist and agnostics without discrimination. He sustains all his creatures like sun nourish and give life to all created beings on earth.

His mercy shine like a sunshine that doesn't discriminate against anyone.

Therefore, **Al-Rehman** can not be attributed to human beings. It is a "divine attribute" reserved for Allah alone.



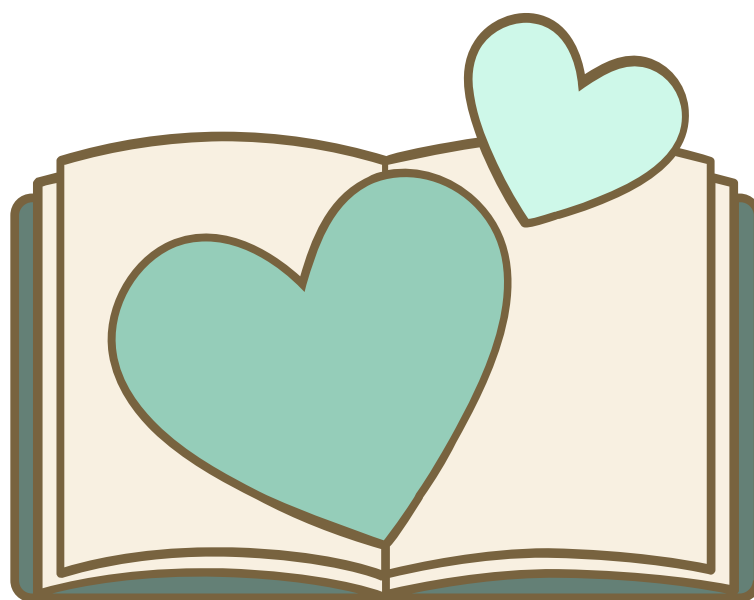


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## Divine Attribute / Human Attribute

**Al-Rehman**- Is a divine attribute, which means it is not possible for a human being to attain such a level of ***Universal mercy as God.*** It is God's love that is incredibly kind and unconditional towards his creation and the entire universe. Love is the foundation of all that exists in the world. Therefore, the Divine attribute is unlimited, whereas human attributes have limitations.

**Rahmah**, mercy can be displayed by human beings in personal interaction and relationships towards creation & towards animals but with certain limitations. It is not in our capacity to show mercy universally.







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الرَّحِيمِ

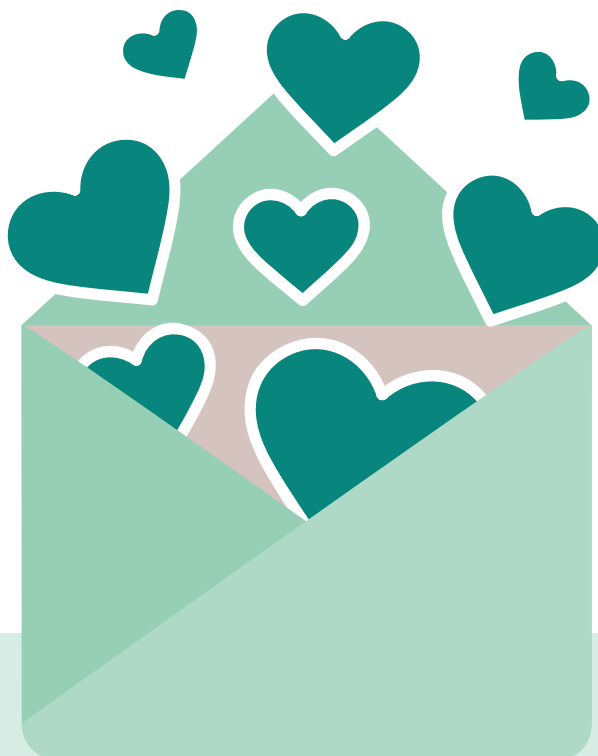
## Al- Raheem: Specific Mercy

The Merciful- refers to that **Specific Mercy** that is endowed upon the obedient believers as a divine gift because of their true belief, good actions, behavior, patience, and devotion to God. They deserve this special, exclusive mercy, of which others are deprived.

Raheem conveys the idea of a constant renewal of generous reward in response from God. Raheem brings divine love into the relationship. This attribute helps humans to manifest loving mercy towards humanity.

**“.And He is Full of Mercy to the Believers”, (Surah Al-Ahzab. No. 33 verse 43).**

According to Ibn al-Qayum, *rahīm* means the continuous manifestation of Grace in our lives and its effects. Therefore, when we engage in any activity we should seek Allah's mercy both **specific** to our need and **universal** mercy that is bestowed upon creation. Only God knows the secret of our soul and desires. It is through God's specific mercy that we attain guidance that leads us towards God's pleasure.





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## Explanation Verse 2 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِي

### 2. "(All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds."

Surah begins with acknowledging God's mercy and compassion over humanity. As a result, it is expected for human beings to be grateful to God and have an "attitude of gratitude" for countless blessings he has showered upon us.

some we are aware of and others we are not aware of.

We show gratitude according to our own understanding and spiritual maturity.

### Three Level of Gratitude

There are various level of gratitude that depends on the level of taqwa (awareness & continuous of God)

***"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'"***

***[Surah Ibrahim, 14:7]***







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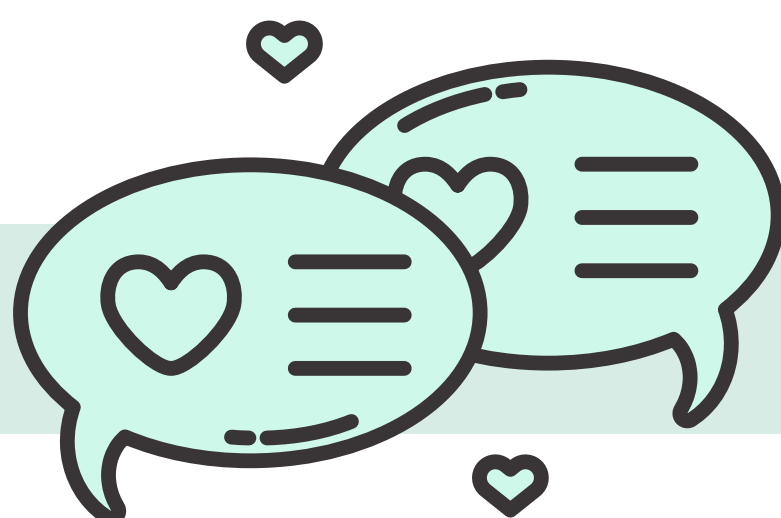
## **Level One Basic level of Gratitude**

**(by Tongue)**

Most of us have been aware of the most common form of Gratitude, that basic feeling of acknowledging what we have and what we don't have in life.

Being grateful is not merely verbalizing it almost every day mindlessly " For example saying Alhamdulillah" becomes ritualistic and common practice rather than meaningful practice.

This form of Gratitude is limited in perspective because the phrase is spoken so frequently that we don't acknowledge that verbal declaration is lacking sincerity and mindfulness. In this case, one is obviously less mindful.





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## Level Two

### Advanced level of Gratitude and Spiritual Maturity

#### (By heart)

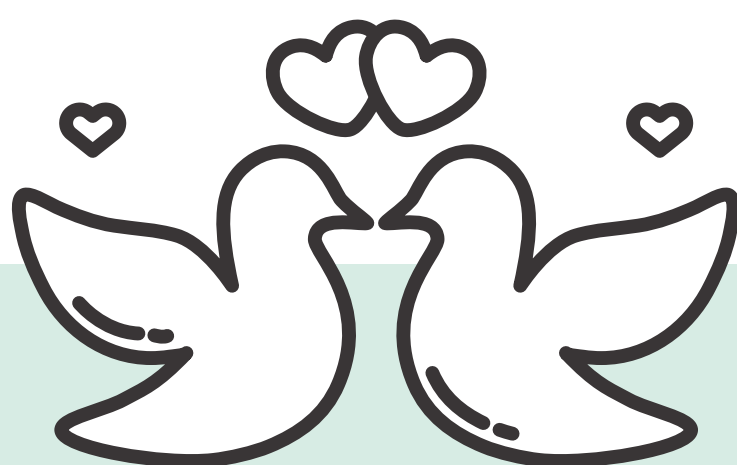
It is easy to engage in the verbal declaration "*alhamdulillah*" without much reflection or mindful practice. A high level of gratitude is achieved by deep introspection of one's self, analyzing our shortcomings, and our attitude towards trials and tribulation of life.

When we are faced with difficult challenges, it is in those painful moments Life teaches us a valuable lesson.

It is reported that some of the Companions of the Holy Prophet were grateful for the calamities that they faced and learn the wisdom behind those events such as

- 1) **Knowing that Allah protected them from something worse befall them**
- 2) **learning lessons through trials of life rather than complaining.**

This kind of gratitude makes us humble and makes us realize our weakness before our creator. Our hearts acknowledge that only assistance and protection comes from God alone beyond physical means. If we reach this level of spiritual maturity we will learn hidden wisdom in difficult life events. We can not avert disastrous consequences but we can turn to God for security and divine protection.







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## Level Three Evolution of soul

### ( By action)

When we are faced with the trial of life, we develop a greater sense of purpose, and we discover wisdom, and reasons behind such painful events. **Even if we are going through a rough experience of life our soul is craving for growth, change, and progress on the conscious and unconscious level.**

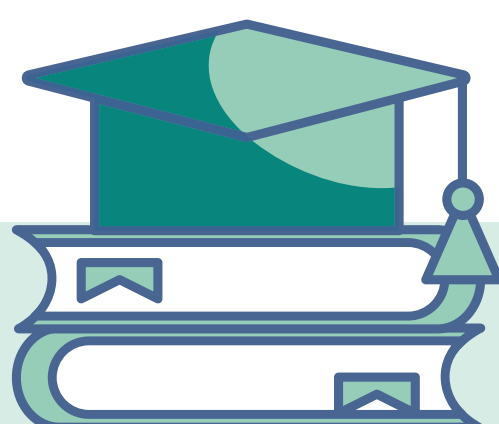
If we learn to accept pain as a part of the divine plan it leads us to a path of transformation from one stage to another.

We develop a healthy mindset instead of giving into complaining we seek opportunities for improvement, growth, and wisdom.

We no longer see pain as an obstacle that deprives us of happiness but as a challenge to overcome. This struggle empowers us and releases us from a victim mentality. we can channel this pain into productive and beneficial work for humanity.

We transform our pain into positive actions and engage in meaningful philanthropic activities to make the world a better place.

when we find reliance upon the Supreme Power we feel empowered psychologically.





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## PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE

According to the latest psychological research in the science of gratitude, there are several benefits that contribute to a healthy mental attitude and psychological well-being.

- Gratitude shifts your focus from what is wrong in our world to the blessings we are receiving in our daily life.
- We become aware and conscious of our blessings rather than being mindless.
- Being grateful to God reduces the attachment to materialism as a result it increases humility.

- 

**Humility: This doesn't mean thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less. (CS. Lewis)**

- People who are grateful to others around them, improve their relationships and the quality of the relationships.
- People who develop an attitude of gratitude feel secure and spiritually satisfied.
- Gratitude is associated with stronger faith and spirituality.

***"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]; but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe.'" [Surah Ibrahim, 14:7]***

**The more we are grateful we will be at peace.  
There is a direct correlation of gratitude to a healthy psychological state.**







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## Gratitude v.s Disbelief

Whereas Ingratitude is disliked by Allah,  
it is equated with disbelief, the word used in Quran for ingratitude  
is Kufr (denying and disbelieving)

Denying all the favors bestowed upon you,  
Denying His unlimited mercy that has sustained you over a lifetime.  
Denying his lordship and existence.  
Denying his loving mercy.

This denial on the core level is the "attitude of disbelief".  
It leads one to the state of misery, one who has lost his soul in this  
world.

This disbelief is referred to in the last verse of surah Fatiha as;

***"The path of those upon whom You have bestowed bounties,  
not (the path) of those whom you have inflicted with Your  
wrath, nor (of those) gone astray***





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## Verse 4

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

### **4. "Master of the Day of Judgement."**

*Explanation: Since God is the sustainer & owner of the world seen/unseen.*

Lord of the Universe and all that contains in it. His Ownership is pointed out, which illustrates His Sovereignty and Domination over everything and everyone.

Thus, the focus of the idea is on the creation of mankind with specific purpose and emphasis on accountability due to free will. Man will be held accountable for his actions, thoughts, behavior, and faculties that he has used or misused on earthly life. He was given the blessing of wealth, health, power, position and authority. He will be questioned about his power, wealth and authority if he has used for the benefit of humanity or for corruption.

***The Day on which no soul shall have aught for (another) soul, and the command That Day shall be (wholly) Allah's", (Surah Al-Infitar, No. 82.verse 19).***







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## Verse 5 Explanation: إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

5. "Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) do we seek help."

### Part 1; إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ

What is the concept of worship from an Islamic perspective?

### CONCEPT OF WORSHIP

Every religion has its own interpretation of the word worship. To some going to church, synagogue and attending ritual practices, and associating oneself with a particular religious institute is enough for worship.

The concept of worship in Islam is unique because It combines the mundane activities of life with the spiritual aspect. Everything mundane can become sacred if there is a right intention behind it, such as eating, drinking, earning, and taking care of family members. Therefore, in Islam external acts (social aspect) are combined with internal (spiritual aspect or intent of heart).

**External (acts) + Internal (Intent of heart) = worship**  
**Social aspect + Spiritual aspect**

Therefore, worship in Islam is not limited to ritualistic practices. It is beyond ritualistic practices, it has a unique role that impacts the social, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of life. which means his/her whole existence is in the submission of God's will.

There is various form of worship but we have covered only two aspects of worship in this book.





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## Social Aspect of Worship

***Encourage believers to show courtesy and cooperation in everyday life as Prophet (peace be upon him) told us: "Receiving your friend with a smile is a type of charity and putting some water in your neighbor's bucket is a charity."***

It is worth noting that even performing one's duties is considered an act of worship such as raising kids. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that whatever one spends for his family is a type of charity. Kindness to the members of one's family is an act of worship as is putting a piece of food lovingly in the mouth of one's spouse. Furthermore, even the acts that we enjoy, when performed according to Divine instructions are considered acts of worship.

## Spiritual Aspect of worship

Due to the specific mercy bestowed upon a believer, it increases their faith and gives a conviction of soul. Therefore, a believer develops a greater understanding of faith that is not limited to ritualistic practices. This kind of inner conviction leads to true devotion and submission to God with love.







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## Verse 5

وإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

**Thee (only) do we seek help**

The believer who develops a greater understanding of faith and conviction of soul will lead a life of true submission and devotion- Seeking assistance from God alone.

Therefore, submission, reliance (Tawakul on Allah) will be part of his/her life.

***The Prophet (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said, ‘A group of people (both men and women) whose hearts will be like the hearts of birds, will enter Jannah’.[5]***

According to Riyādh As Ṣālihīn, this ḥadīth has been interpreted as those people who put their trust in Allāh will be in heaven.

It seems like there is a correlation between the way the people of reliance live their lives in this world.





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## PEOPLE OF RELIANCE AND TAWAKUL

### **People of Reliance & Tawakkul will display the following characteristics;**

- His personal pleasure is not about the pursuit of worldly desires, but rather, it is about earning the pleasure of Allah.
- A true believer is conscious of Allah's existence at all times even in private affairs.
- As a result, the believer will be unselfish and humble, he will not desire status, glory, or personal recognition.
- Have inner peace and conviction that Allah will reward his good deeds and will hold him to account for all his bad deeds.
- Allah's pleasure is earned through both the performance of ritualistic prayers as well as interaction with other people.
- Islam does not think much of mere rituals when they are performed mechanically and have no influence on one's inner self or soul.

As Prophet Mohammed (S) mentioned '**Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life, and my death, are (all) for Allah, [Al-Qur'an 6:162-163].**







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## Verse 6

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

"Guide us (O' Lord) on the Straight Path."

### TYPE OF GUIDANCE

There is various type of guidance in order to understand the significance of spiritual guidance let's analyze other forms as well.

**Existential Guidance** is the all-encompassing guidance that embraces the entire creation. Allah gave natural inclination to all created beings and instill in them the instinct of survival for physical existence.

**Educational Guidance** It is a process of assisting the individual in making wise choices in relation to educational life, choosing a career path.

**vocational Guidance** is a type of guidance where mere information and advice is given in regard to choosing an occupation, preparing for it, entering the work field, and progressing in it.

**Personal Guidance** is a type of guidance given to an individual to overcome personal challenges whether social, emotional, psychological, ethical, or moral. It is a process of guidance helping the individual towards the path of self-development.





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**Divine Guidance:** This is a specific type of guidance that is bestowed upon believers as a blessing from God to leads them towards the path of spiritual development and evolution of the soul. The aim of such guidance is for individuals to attain salvation through spiritual teachings and be able to distinguish between good and evil, virtue and vice, right and wrong, felicity, and wickedness for moral development. Such individuals attain spiritual maturity.

**Religious Guidance'** Is acquired through the teachings of prophets, sages, messengers, and divine Books to bring awareness towards a physical and spiritual existence. Teaching through prophetic guidance that actions have consequences. The choices made in the physical world affect our spiritual existence.





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## Verse 7 Explanation

### Two paths & Deviation

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy bounties, not (the path) of those inflicted with Thy wrath, nor (of those) gone astray."

### Part 1: صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ There are two paths

1-Path of divine guidance & success- leads to the salvation, happiness of the soul, and blessings.

2-Path of misguidance- those who deserved His wrath due to consequences for wrong actions -who neglected the right path and went astray. This path leads to misery and unhappiness.







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## Verse 7 Explanation

وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ  
وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالشَّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا

And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allah has bestowed his favor such as the martyrs, and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.

The verse conveys the deepest spiritual meaning:

- Those who have to attain spiritual success will receive divine guidance and special blessings.
- A believer who obeys the prophet will enter into spiritual fellowship and receive blessings as those of Prophets, truthful servants, martyrs, and righteous.
- They will enjoy some of the similar blessings of those who have achieved high spiritual status in the sight of Allah.





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## Verse 7 Explanation

**Part 2: غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ**

**Those inflicted with Thy wrath, nor (of those) gone astray."**

### **Path of misguidance;**

According to spiritual perspective, guidance means to lead someone to a goal and achieve salvation, then misguidance is the;

- 1) Absence of guidance
- 2) Neglect of guidance
- 3) Losing one's soul.

Allah does not wish to misguide a person. **If a person deliberately denies the truth or refusing to accept, turning one's back towards it is willful rejection - misguidance.**

Misguiding someone simply means that He is cut off from the divine guidance and left alone, as a result, man is lost in darkness.





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## Summary of the 7 Principles

### Attitude of Gratitude



**G**ratitude to God can only arise through Acknowledging Him as beneficent and merciful. Who provides, nourish and sustain man's physical, spiritual, social, material, and immaterial needs.

By recognizing His lordship and realizing that He is THE only sustainer and protector of our soul throughout the entire life.

### Unconditional love & Mercy



By deep awareness of his specific blessings and mercy. Spiritual awareness leads to acknowledging his Divine attributes and mercy.

Knowing that God has not abandoned humanity but His mercy intervenes in our life and sustains us in difficult times, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.







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## Accountability & Personal Responsibility



Living a purposeful life with awareness towards one's actions and consequences rather than meaningless existence. Existing for the sake of existence is not an option for those who are on a spiritual path. Makes one responsible for his/her own actions rather than engaging in destructive actions mindlessly.

## Devotion to God

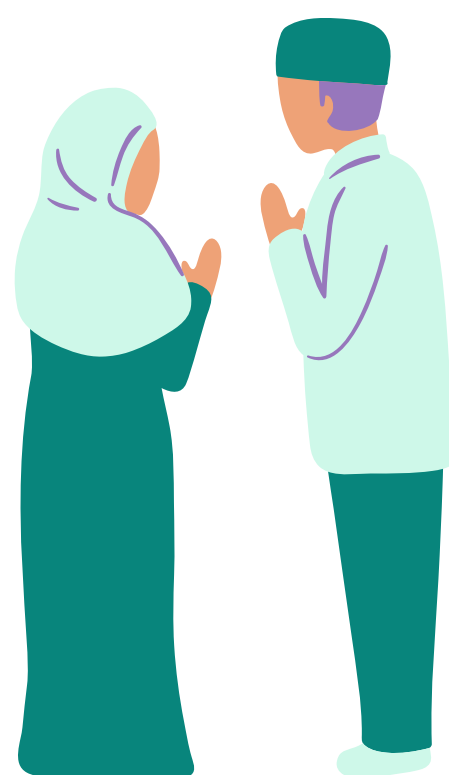


Acknowledging His lordship over the entire universe.  
Recognizing that God is the Only creator & sustainer of the human soul.  
Recognizing that none is worthy of worship but God.  
Seek assistance and divine protection because God has complete authority over life situations and circumstances.

## Seeking Guidance



Seeking spiritual guidance that leads to the liberation of the soul and helps one attain the pleasure of Allah. Seeking *specific guidance* that leads to spiritual development and growth.

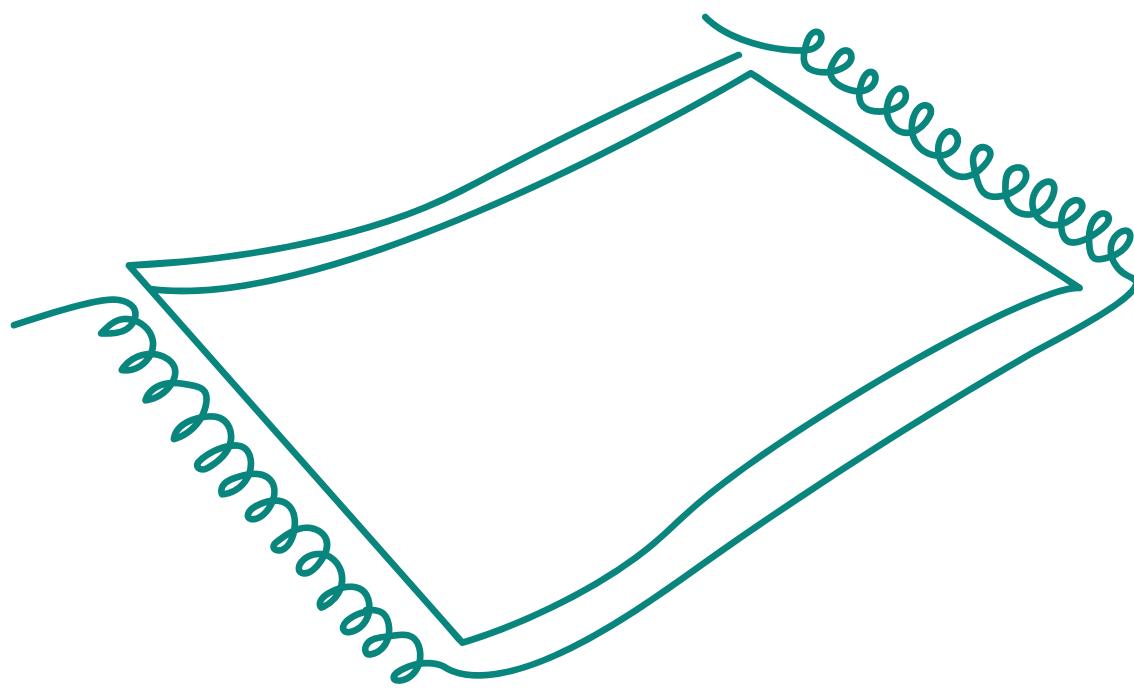




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## Tawakul and Reliance

Relying on greater power in times of difficulty and need. This does not mean that we don't seek help for others in our worldly life, but to rely on Allah means to turn to God first and then seek a solution to the specific problem through other means. This encourages one to cultivate spiritual reliance on God.



## Seeking Protection from Misguidance

People fall into temptations and misguidance that has a damaging effect on their spiritual, personal as well as worldly life. Seeking protection from Allah is not just a supplication but when one encounters such trials He turns to Allah relies on His assistance so he will not fall into a trap in the first place.





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## SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

- Cultivating an attitude of gratitude by recognizing 5 things you are grateful for each day. Record in your journal.
- Practicing gratitude improves the psycho-spiritual well-being of a person and leads to a sense of happiness and fulfillment in life.
- Make a journal and record your blessings for a week.
- Record anything significant or nonsignificant that makes you grateful to Allah.







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# Thank you!

I am glad to see that you have joined our spiritual learning circle. I hope you will enjoy your learning experience with me and gained beneficial knowledge. If you are interested to learn more in-depth explanations of Surah Fatiha, check out the course.

Many students across the world have benefited from the courses offered in the past 10 years.

Please, leave your review after the completion of the ebook. Your input is important to me and it will help us improve the course material for future students.

Looking forward to hearing from you!  
Feel free to reach out if you have any questions as you progress or implement spiritual exercise.

Peace and Blessing!  
Uzma Sharaf.