

The Linguistic and Semantic Coherence of Surah Al-Fatihah

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to highlight some aspects of the miraculous of Surah Al-Fatihah, clarify the purposes (Maqasid) and objectives of the Surah, show the intended meaning through linguistic and semantic coherence, and illustrate its impact on contemplating the Quran. The problem of the research lies in the fact that Surah Al-Fatihah is a short surah with many meanings, and it has collected all the purposes of the Quran. It also demonstrates linguistic and semantic coherence; thus the researcher seeks to uncover and analyse these aspects. The research adopts a descriptive and semantic analysis approach where the existing phenomenon is described and analysed and its meanings are extracted. The research findings reveal that Al-Fatihah contains a great linguistic miracle where verbs and sentences are proportional and coherent. Additionally, analysis of the verses shows that they contain the two most important aspects emphasized by Islam, which are knowledge and deeds (beneficial knowledge and righteous deeds). Moreover, the research found that Surah Al-Fatihah has three parts: a section with nominal sentences to describe Allah's attributes, a section with verbal sentences to express the actions of worshipers, and a mixed section that contains both nominal and verbal sentences with the latter starting with the subject followed by its object. The researchers recommend further studies on the linguistic and semantic coherence in other chapters of Al-Quran to explore more miracles of Al-Quran.

Keywords: Linguistic Coherence, Semantic Coherence, Surah Al-Fatihah, Purpose of Surah Al-Fatihah, Quranic Exegesis

Introduction

Surah Al-Fatihah is one of the greatest chapters of the Quran. It is short in length yet abundant in meaning, and it encompasses all the objectives of the Quran. It exhibits both linguistic and

semantic coherence, making it an area of interest for researchers seeking to explore these aspects.

The Virtue of Surah Al-Fatihah and its Multiple Names

Surah Al-Fatihah has a great virtue, which is reflected in its multiple names. Among its names are: Fatihatulkitab "The Opening of the Book," Ummulkitab, "The Mother of the Book," Ummulquraan "The Mother of the Quran," and Assab'ulmathani "The Seven Repeated Verses" because it is recited in every single rak'ah of prayer according to what is popular among scholars (Ibn Rajab, 1427 AH). It is also called Alhamdulillah "The Praise of Allah," Alhamiyah "The Protector," and Alshafiyah "The Healer (Ibn Juzay, 1995)." No other chapter in the heavenly books has been revealed like it. This is evidenced by:

- What is narrated by Ubada bin As-Samit that: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the opening of the Book (i.e., Surah Al-Fatihah) (Al-Bukhari, 2001)." It is named "Al-Fatihah" (the Opening) because it opens the chapters of the Quran in writing and recitation during prayer. This is one of the reasons why some scholars have agreed that the arrangement of the Quranic chapters is based on divine order (Ibn Rajab, 2006), just as the arrangement of the verses within each chapter is.

- The hadith of Abu Hurairah, that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "By the One in Whose hand is my soul, nothing like it was revealed in the Tawrah, the Injil, the Zabur, or the Furqan. It is the seven repeated verses (i.e., Surah Al-Fatihah) and the Mighty Quran that I have been given (Ahmad, 2000).

- The narration of Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri is that some of the companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him, were on a journey and passed by a village of the Arabs. They asked for hospitality but were not welcomed. The villagers asked if there is anyone of them is a Raaq (a healer by recitation), and they were told that the leader of the village was either bitten or stung. One of the companions recited Surah Al-Fatihah and the sick leader was cured. The villagers gave them a flock of sheep as a gift, but the companion refused to accept it until he mentioned it to the Prophet, peace be upon him. He then told the Prophet about what happened, and said: "O' Prophet of Allah, I only recited Al-Fatihah. The Prophet smiled and said, "And how did you know that it is a Ruqyah (healing recitation)?" Then he said, "Take from their flock and give me a share with you (Muslim, 4/1727).

Objectives and Purposes (Maqasid) of Surah Al-Fatiha with An Explanation of Some Aspects of its Miraculous

Allah has obligated Muslims to recite Surat Al-Fatihah in every prayer because it contains the essence of the entire religion. This alone indicates the miraculous nature of this surah. Ibn Al-Qayyim said about Surat Al-Fatihah: "Know that this surah contains the essentials of the loftiest aims, and its inclusion is the most complete, and it encompasses them in the most perfect way (Ibn Qayyim, 1995).

The opening chapter of the Quran, Al-Fatiha, has gathered all the (Maqasid) of the Quran in a concise manner. Imam Al-Zarkashy said, "The sciences of the Quran are divided into three categories: monotheism, remembrance, and rulings. Monotheism includes knowledge of the creation, and knowledge of the Creator through His names, attributes, and actions. Remembrance includes promises, warnings, heaven, hell, and clarification of the apparent

and hidden. Rulings include all obligations, clarification of benefits and harms, and commands, prohibitions, and recommendations. And this is why Al-Fatihah became known as the mother of the Quraan because it contains the three categories mentioned earlier. As for monotheism, it starts from the beginning of the chapter and continues until the phrase "Master of the Day of Judgment." Rulings are found in the phrase "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help." And as for remembrance, it starts from the phrase "Guide us" until the end of the chapter. Therefore, it became known as the mother of the Quraan because all of its sections branch out from it like daughters (Al-Zarkashi, 1955).

One of the aspects of the miraculous of Surat Al-Fatihah is that it includes a statement of the way to reach the satisfaction and obedience of Allah. This is achieved through both outward and inward actions, meaning actions of the body and actions of the heart. Guidance in this matter is ultimately a gift from Allah, and evidence of this can be found in the Tafsir of "Al-Tahrir wa Al-Tanwir" by Sultan al-Ulamaa Al-'Izz ibn Abdul-Salam. He states that in his book "Hal al-Rumuz wa Mafatih al-Kunuz" the path to Allah includes both outward actions (meaning physical actions) and inward actions (meaning actions of the heart). The outward aspect is represented by the Shariah (Islamic law), while the inward aspect is represented by the truth. The goal of both the Shariah and the truth is to establish worship in the manner that is required of the individual. This is summarized by the statement in Surat Al-Fatihah: "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help (Ibn Ashur, 1963).

Islam is a comprehensive and complete religion that encompasses all worldly and otherworldly matters. One of its miraculous aspects, as mentioned by scholars of interpretation, is that it contains the most beautiful belief, worship, transactions, and ethics. Scholar Rashid Rida stated that the Holy Quran was revealed to clarify several matters: firstly, to affirm the concept of monotheism; secondly, to promise and give glad tidings to those who follow it and warn those who do not, with the threat of punishment; thirdly, to establish worship that enlivens monotheism in hearts and strengthens it in souls; fourthly, to explain the path to happiness and how to attain the blessings of this world and the hereafter; and fifthly, to narrate the stories of those who adhered to Allah's boundaries and rules and those who transgressed them. It is mentioned that these matters contain the people's worldly and otherworldly lives and happiness, and that despite its small size, Surat al-Fatihah contains all of this comprehensively, without doubt or ambiguity (Rashid, 1990).

Therefore, whoever reflects upon Surah Al-Fatihah -as every believer is required to reflect upon it in their recitation in general and in their prayer in particular- will see the richness of its meanings, its beauty, its symmetry, and its majesty that will captivate their heart and illuminate its facets (Al-Banna, 1949). What has been mentioned is a clarification of some aspects of the miraculous nature of this surah.

The Linguistic Balance in Surah Al-Fatihah

It is stated in the dictionaries that (Tanasub) is resemblance (al-Sobuni, 1997), and everything that is proportional: it is moderate. (Majma' al-Lughah al-Arabiyyah, 1994). Harmonious singing: proportional and his melodies did not differ. (Ibnu Sayyidih, 2000) From the foregoing, we understand that the term proportionality is compatibility, similarity, balance, and symmetry. It means similarity and balance between two things. We mean by linguistic

balance or proportionality in this research, i.e. balance from the verbal -formal aspect and from the semantic-meaningful aspect.

Verbal Balance

There are two types of sentences in the Arabic language (Maryam et al., 2022): Verb Sentence (al- Jumlah al-Fe'liyyah), Nominative Sentence (al-Jumlah al-Ismiyyah). Nominal sentences have characteristics that distinguish them. In terms of meaning, they benefit constancy, stability means permanence (Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, 2021, al-Zamakhshari, 1986). Verb sentence indicate renewal (meaning they do not have a permanent character). When using nominal sentences, the meaning in the context of the verses is constancy. When using phrasal verbs, the meaning in the context of the verses is temporary and not permanent (Othman, 2022).

The al-Fatihah can be divided into three sections

The first section is about God Almighty (it includes praise to Him alone, affirmation of the attribute of mercy, and affirmation of the attribute of sovereignty to Him, glory be to Him, the ruler of the Day of Resurrection.

The second section relates to a matter between us and God: worship is for Him alone, and seeking help is only with Him. It is His saying
(Beware of worship and Thine aid we seek)

The third section is a supplication and a request for us from God. We ask for gifts, guidance to the path of truth, justice, and goodness in the manner of those who preceded us of the people of truth, and not in the path of those who have gone astray or deviated, which is the Almighty's saying:

(Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have gone astray)

The straight path guided us, the human beings are included in the human beings, and its provisions of worship, factories, and etiquette, and His saying: Neither those who have gone astray nor those who have gone astray includes all the stories of the lost nations and refers to the details of their delusions which are told about them in the Qur'an. From the meanings of Al-Fatihah - explicitly and implicitly - there is no definite grammatical knowledge of the purposes contained in the Qur'an. And that calls on the reader to ask for detail according to ability and ability. For this reason, it was obligatory to recite Al-Fatihah in every rak'ah of the prayer, in order to remember what is in its folds (Ibn 'Asyur, 1984)

Therefore, the first section is about the attributes of God, the second section is about the relationship between us and God, and the third section is about an order that we ask from God, and it is something related to us, which is seeking the path of righteousness and guidance. The thing that needs contemplation and contemplation from the linguistic point of view is that the first part consists linguistically of nominal sentences because they are a description of God, Glory be to Him, and the attributes of God Almighty are permanent, continuous and uninterrupted attributes, so it is suitable for the nominal sentence.

The second section is a mixture of the two sentences because it relates to God and us. The third section consists of verbal sentences, because they are related to us, humans, so they are suitable for verbal sentences, because human actions are unstable and unstable, so faith, for example, increases and decreases. Ibn Abi al-Izz al-Hanafi said in Sharh al-Tahawiyah: The evidence for the increase and decrease of faith from the Book, the Sunnah, and the Salafi narrations are very numerous: among them: the Almighty's saying: (And when His verses are recited to them, it increases them in faith) [Al-Anfal: 2], (And God increases those who are guided in guidance) [Maryam: 76], {And those who believe will increase in faith) [Al-Muddathir: 31], (It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers so that they may increase in faith with their faith) [Al-Fath: 4], (Those to whom the people said that the people have gathered for you, so fear them, and He increased their faith And they said: Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs) [Al-Imran: 173]

So that, the actions of the servants are not fixed, so it is appropriate for the verb sentence. We also notice the balance between nouns and verbs. The sentences that spoke of describing God, Glory be to Him, were specific to names, and the sentences that spoke of asking people to worship, seeking help and guidance were specific to actions, and the sentences that involved participation.

Now let's consider another thing: in fact, Al-Fatihah is an elaborate analogy, why? We say something is balanced when it is suspended from the middle. So that when you balance something from its middle, half of it will be on one side, and the other half on the other side. The verse that falls in the middle of the surah is His saying (You we worship and You we seek help). This verse contains two syllables: the first syllable: Thee we worship, and the second syllable: Thee we seek help, so we notice that: Thee we worship, the conclusion of the first section.

The evidence for this is that if people knew the meaning of (Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds, The Most Merciful, the Most Merciful, Owner of the Day of Judgment) What result would they reach? The result (Do we worship not) means that we acknowledge servitude to God, and we seek help from Him, and the greatest help that guidance is obtained from Him, Glory be to Him. So the stanza (Do we seek help) is an introduction to the second section, as was His saying (Do we worship) as a conclusion to the first section, and thus it appears that the surah is well balanced. From the middle verse, and this is one of the evidences of the miraculous, so the structure of the surah from the linguistic point of view is a linguistically creative structure, a balanced structure.

The Emotional Balance

There are two topics in Surat Al-Fatihah (knowledge and action), and knowledge and work are two things that are known throughout the reckoning of the servants, and it came in the interpretation of the Almighty's saying: (and teach them the Book and wisdom) Al-Baqara 129, it is knowledge and work, and a man is not called wise until he combines them. It has also been reported that the good of this world is good in knowledge and work, and in the Hereafter is good, facilitating the reckoning and entering Paradise (Al-Tha'labi, 1997).

As the division of people in the Hereafter came according to knowledge and action, Imam Al-Baidawi said in the interpretation of the Almighty saying: And whoever obeys God and the

Messenger, then those with those who are blessed by God, from the Prophets and and the truthful and the righteous, and a good companion. That bounty is from God, and God suffices as All-Knowing (70) Women. He said: He divided them into four according to their positions in knowledge and work (Al-Baidhowi, 1997).

The Companions were very keen to combine knowledge and action. It was narrated on the authority of Othman bin Affan (may God be pleased with him), Abdullah bin Masoud, and Ubayy bin Ka'b that the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, used to recite ten verses to them, And they did not take into account the other ten until they knew what was in these verses. Knowledge and action. He said: Then learn the Qur'an and knowledge.

It is one of the most obligatory duties upon scholars and seekers of knowledge to take care of the Book of God and the Sunnah of His Messenger, may God's prayers and peace be upon him and his family, by studying, memorizing, deriving, analyzing, teaching, and applying, combining knowledge and action (Ibn Taimiyyah, 1999).

Surah Al-Fatihah, or The Opening, presents knowledge in the beginning and it contains actions in the ending. The first part contains: (In the name of Allah, the most compassionate, the most merciful, All praise is for Allah Lord of all worlds. The most compassionate, the most merciful. Master of the day of judgment). These verses are considered as knowledge from Allah. Through His words, we are taught that the praise is belong to Him because all perfections and the blessings, in this world, came from Allah because He is the only absolute Ruler of all powers in the worlds including the Hereafter, the Day of Judgement.

The second part contains: (You alone we do worship and of You alone we ask for help. Guide us on the Straight Path. The Path of those You have blessed, not those You are displeased with, nor of those who gone astray). All of these verses contain actions. From these verses, it reveals that the servants who are among the true believers with a firm foundation in the knowledge of Allah will only worship and rely on Allah alone without doubt.

With more contemplation, it appeared in the surah that people can be classified into three conditions; The first one: an oath that attained knowledge and followed it with action, and this is on the straight path. It means if your knowledge leads you to action, then you are on the straight path, or in other words: in order for you to be on the straight path, you must first acquire knowledge and follow up with action. The second; some people have the knowledge, but they were misled, and they did not translate it into deeds, and these are the ones who inflicted with His Wrath. The third; a group of people in which their work is not based on knowledge, and this group has the zeal to work in ignorance, thus it is meaningless even if you work with good intentions.

The surah has begun with knowledge, knowledge of monotheism and the attributes of Allah Almighty: (In the name of Allah the most compassionate, most merciful. All praise is for Allah lord of all worlds* the most compassionate, most merciful. Master of the day of judgment). Then it talked about action and knowledge together, in his saying (You alone we do worship and of You alone we ask for help) Then it talked about action: (Guide us along the Straight Path. The Path of those You have blessed). Then it talked about knowledge without action, and action without knowledge (not those You are displeased with, or those who are astray).

Thus, the surah is completely symmetrical, and the surah has balanced the two topics perfectly.

Findings and Conclusion

The research has shown the virtue and importance of Surah Al-Fatihah and its multiple names, such as "Umm Al-Kitab" (the Mother of the Book), "Al-Shafiyyah" (the Healer), and "Al-Waqiyyah" (the Preserver). Nothing like it has been revealed in the Quran, Torah, Bible, or Psalms. Additionally, some aspects of the miraculous nature of Surah Al-Fatihah have been highlighted, as it contains, despite its small size, the fundamental themes and objectives of the Quran and the highest goals of human aspirations. The linguistic and semantic symmetry of the Surah has also been revealed, as it is harmonious and balanced in terms of language and actions, and this has an impact on the contemplation of the Quran.

The research indicates that the phrase "Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in" (You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help) combines both Shariah (Islamic law) and reality, representing the apparent and the hidden path that leads to the complete servitude to Allah. The study also reveals that nominal sentences have distinct characteristics that express permanence and stability, while verbal sentences express renewal and change. Moreover, the research demonstrates that Surah Al-Fatihah has three parts: a section with nominal sentences to describe Allah's attributes, a section with verbal sentences to express the actions of worshipers, and a mixed section that contains both nominal and verbal sentences with the latter starting with the subject followed by its object.

The research found that despite its brevity, Surah Al-Fatiha contains a unique linguistic miracle. This is evident through the Linguistic Balance between nominal and verbal sentences, as well as between nouns and verbs in the surah. Additionally, this linguistic miracle is evident through the emotional balance, where the surah combines knowledge and action in a unique harmony that highlights their importance in the lives of worshipers. Therefore the researchers recommend further studies on the linguistic and semantic coherence in other chapters of Al-Quran to explore more miracles of Al-Quran.

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