

VOLUME 1

# TAFSEER AS-SA'DI

## JUZ' 1-3

تفسير السعدي  
(تيسير الكريم الرحمن في تفسير القرآن)  
جزء ١-٣

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01.

## Soorat al-Fâtiḥah

(Makki)<sup>1</sup>



*In the name of Allah,  
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾  
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ  
﴿٥﴾ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ  
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾ (سورة الفاتحة: ١-٧)

- 1:1. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.<sup>2</sup>
- 1:2. Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,
- 1:3. The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,
- 1:4. Master of the Day of Judgement.
- 1:5. You [alone] we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help;

<sup>1</sup> In as-Sa'di's original work, these notes are mentioned with some chapters, but not mentioned with all 114 chapters. (Editor)

<sup>2</sup> The meanings of the verses of the Qur'an in this book (with some minor changes to the punctuation) have been translated by the translator. (Editor)



- 1:6. Guide us to the straight path,  
 1:7. The path of those whom You have blessed; not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.

«In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful» that is, I begin with every name of Allah (*Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* – Glorified and Exalted is He); this includes all the (beautiful) names of Allah.

«Allah» – He is the One Who is worshipped, the only One Who deserves to be worshipped, because of the divine attributes He has, which are attributes of perfection.

«the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful». These two names indicate that He possesses great mercy that encompasses all things and includes all living beings, and He has decreed it for the pious, the followers of His Prophets and Messengers. Absolute mercy is for them; others have a share of it.

It should be noted that one of the basic principles on which the early generations of the Ummah and its leading scholars are agreed is belief in the names and attributes of Allah and how those attributes are manifested. For example, they believe that He is Most Gracious, Most Merciful; He possesses mercy that is one of His attributes and this mercy has an impact on His creation. So all types of blessings are signs of His mercy. The same applies to all of His names. We may say concerning the All-Knowing that He has (unlimited) knowledge, by means of which He knows all things. Similarly, the All-Powerful is possessed of might and has power over all things.

«Praise be to Allah». This refers to praising Allah for the attributes of perfection and for His actions that are based on generosity and justice. So to Him be perfect praise in all ways.

«the Lord of the worlds». The Lord is the One Who sustains all creatures – which refers to all beings other than Allah – because He

created them, granted them everything that they need and bestowed great blessings upon them; if they were deprived of those blessings they would not be able to survive, for whatever blessings they enjoy come from Him.

He sustains His creation in two ways, general and specific.

In general terms, this refers to His creation of all creatures, His granting of provision to them and His guiding them to that which is in their best interests, which enables them to survive in this world.

In specific terms, it refers to His cherishing of His close friends, by means of instilling faith in their hearts, guiding them to it, perfecting it for them and warding off from them distractions and obstacles that come between them and faith. In real terms, this means guiding them to everything that is good and protecting them from everything that is bad. Perhaps it is for this reason that most of the supplications of the Prophets used the word Lord (*Rabb*),<sup>3</sup> since all their requests and needs came under His special cherishing.

The phrase «the Lord of the worlds» indicates that He alone has the power to create, and He alone controls His creation, bestows blessings and is completely independent of means, whilst all of creation is dependent upon Him in all respects.

«Master of the Day of Judgement» The Master (*Mâlik*) is the one who possesses the attributes of sovereignty, one of the implications of which is that He enjoins and forbids, rewards and punishes, and controls His subjects in all ways. This sovereignty is connected to the Day of Judgement, which is the Day of Resurrection, the day on which people will be judged on the basis of their deeds, both good and bad. On that day, His perfect sovereignty, justice and wisdom

<sup>3</sup> Wherever possible, Arabic terms have been translated into English. In cases where we have chosen to retain the Arabic, the transliterated word or phrase is shown in italics the first time it appears in the text. The term is also defined in the glossary found at the end of this book. (Editor)



the apparent meanings or likening Him to His creation, is seen in the word «Praise», as discussed above.

It affirms prophethood in the words «Guide us to the straight path», because that guidance is not possible without sending Messengers.

It affirms recompense for deeds in the words «Master of the Day of Judgement», and tells us that the recompense will be on the basis of justice, because this is the meaning of the word judgement.

It affirms the divine decree, and tells us that humans act on the basis of free will, which is contrary to the views of the Qadaris<sup>4</sup> and Jabaris.<sup>5</sup> In fact, it refutes all the followers of innovation [and misguidance] in the verse «Guide us to the straight path» because the straight path is knowing the truth and acting upon it, but everyone who follows innovation [and misguidance] does the opposite of that.

It speaks of being sincere towards Allah in terms of worship and seeking help, in the verse «You [alone] we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help».

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Fâtiḥah.

All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.



<sup>4</sup> Qadari: follower of a theological school of thought that denied the divine will and decree, and said that man has absolute free will, therefore whatever he does is purely his choice and his will is independent of the will of Allah.

<sup>5</sup> Jabari: follower of a theological school of thought that said that man has no free will, and whatever he does of good or evil is because it is decreed for him, and he is therefore compelled to do it and has no choice in the matter.

## 02.

## Soorat al-Baqarah

(Madani)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah,  
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful



الْم (١) ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ (٢) الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ  
وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ (٣) وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ  
وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ (٤) أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (٥)

(سورة البقرة: ١-٥)

2:1. Alif. Lâm. Meem.<sup>6</sup>

2:2. This is the Book about which there is no doubt; in it is guidance for those who fear Allah,

2:3. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them;

<sup>6</sup> Groups of letters (*al-huroof al-muqatta'ah*) appear at the beginning of several soorahs. The most correct scholarly view states that we are required to believe in them as they appear to be, without delving into their meaning, knowledge of which we should leave to Allah. We believe that they were not revealed in vain, and that there is wisdom behind them of which we are not aware.



- 2:4. And who believe in the Revelation sent down to you, and in what was sent before your time, and believe with certainty in the hereafter.
- 2:5. It is they who are following guidance from their Lord and it is they who will prosper.

We have discussed the *basmalah* (the phrase *bismillâh ir-Rahmân ir-Raheem*) above. With regard to the letters that appear at the beginning of some soorahs, the most prudent approach is to refrain from discussing their meaning, without basing that on any *shar'î* (of or pertaining to Sharia; Islamic) text, whilst being certain that Allah (ﷻ) did not reveal them in vain; rather there is wisdom behind that, of which we are not aware.

«This is the Book» that is, this great Book is the Book in a true sense; it contains that which the previous Books did not contain of great knowledge and clear truth. So «there is no doubt» about it in any way, shape or form. Stating that there is no doubt implies the opposite; the opposite of doubt is certainty, so this Book contains certain knowledge that dispels doubt. This is a useful principle to note, that when it is stated that something is not the case, that inevitably refers to the opposite.

As it is based on certainty, and guidance cannot be attained except on the basis of certainty, Allah says: «in it is guidance for those who fear Allah». Guidance is the means of being directed away from misguidance and doubt, and it is the means of following the proper ways. Guidance is mentioned, but to what is not mentioned; Allah did not say guidance towards achieving such and such a purpose or to such and such a thing, because He intended it to be general in meaning. It is guidance to that which is in people's best interests in both realms (this world and the hereafter). So it is guidance for people in all matters, both fundamental and minor. It differentiates true from

false, sound from flawed, and it explains to them how to follow the paths that will benefit them in this world and in the hereafter.

Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere: «as guidance for humankind» (2: 185) – which is general in meaning, but here and elsewhere He says «guidance for those who fear Allah» because it is, in and of itself, guidance for all people, but those who are doomed do not pay heed and they do not accept the guidance of Allah. Thus proof is established against them and they do not benefit from it because they are doomed. But the pious are those who have attained the main cause of achieving guidance, namely *taqwâ* (piety or fear of Allah), the true meaning of which is taking measures to protect themselves from the wrath and punishment of Allah by obeying His commands and heeding His prohibitions. So they are guided by it and they benefit from it in the fullest sense.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

«O you who believe. If you fear Allah, He will give you the insight to distinguish between right and wrong...» (*al-Anfâl* 8: 29)

So the pious are the ones who benefit from the verses (*âyât*, lit. signs) of the Qur'an and the signs in creation.

Guidance is of two types: guidance in the sense of being aware of the message, and guidance in the sense of being helped to follow the message. The pious have been granted both types of guidance, whereas others have not been helped to follow the message. Being aware of the message without being helped to act upon it is not guidance in any real or complete sense.

Then Allah describes the pious in terms of both inward and outward deeds, because piety (*taqwâ*) includes both. He says: «Who believe in the unseen». The true meaning of belief or faith is complete affirmation of what the Messengers taught; this also includes physical actions. It does not refer to believing in things that are visible or may be known through any of the physical senses, because in that regard there is no difference between the Muslim and the disbeliever. Rather the issue



to something other than what they say, which results in them not believing in the correct meaning, even if they believe the wording. Therefore they do not believe in them in a true sense.

﴿and in what was sent before your time﴾. This includes belief in all the previous Books; belief in the Books implies belief in the Messengers and everything that the Books contain, especially the Torah, Gospel and Psalms. This is something unique to the believers, that they believe in all the divinely revealed Books and in all the Messengers, and they do not differentiate between any of them.

﴿and believe with certainty in the hereafter﴾. The hereafter is that which comes after death; it is singled out for mention after discussing beliefs in general terms, because belief in the Last Day is one of the pillars of faith, and because it gives one the strongest motive to hope for reward, fear punishment and strive hard. Certainty is perfect knowledge that leaves no room for doubt at all and should prompt one to strive hard and do righteous deeds.

﴿It is they﴾ that is, those who have these praiseworthy characteristics ﴿who are following guidance from their Lord﴾. The word guidance (*hudā*) appears in the indefinite form, which in Arabic is an indication of how great it is; what guidance can be greater than the characteristics mentioned above, of having sound belief and righteous deeds? True guidance cannot be anything but the guidance followed by these people; anything that is contrary to that is misguidance.

The preposition (in the phrase translated here as ﴿It is they who are following guidance﴾, *lit.* "on guidance") is indicative of superiority. A different preposition is used when referring to misguidance, as in the verse:

﴿...and verily either we or you are rightly guided or clearly misguided.﴾ (Saba' 34: 24)

– because the one who is guided is elevated to a superior position by means of that guidance, whereas the one who is misguided is sinking in it and is despised as a result.

﴿it is they who will prosper﴾. Prosperity means achieving what you are seeking and being saved from what you fear. Prosperity is exclusive to them, because there is no way of attaining prosperity except by following their path. Any paths other than that are paths that lead to doom, loss and destruction.

Therefore, when Allah mentions the characteristics of the true believers, He also mentions the characteristics of the disbelievers, who openly show their disbelief, stubbornly opposing the Messenger:



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْتَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشْوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾﴾ (سورة

البقرة: ٦-٧)

- 2:6. As for those who disbelieve, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe.
- 2:7. Allah has placed a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and over their eyes is a cover; theirs will be a severe penalty.

Here Allah tells us concerning those who disbelieve – that is, those who have the characteristics of disbelief, which has become a definitive part of their identity – that nothing can deter them from their disbelief and no exhortation can make them give it up. They will persist in their disbelief, so it is all the same to them whether you warn them or not, for they will not believe. The essence of disbelief is rejection or partial rejection of that which the Messenger (ﷺ) brought. These disbelievers do not benefit from the call (to Islam); it is only given in order to establish proof against them. It is as if this was intended to put an end to hope on the part of the Messenger (ﷺ)

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Baqarah. All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.



### 03. Soorat Âl 'Imrân

(Madani)



The first eighty-odd verses of this soorah have to do with debating with the Christians, highlighting the flaws in their arguments and calling them to enter the true religion, which is Islam, as the first part of Soorat al-Baqarah spoke of debating with the Jews, as discussed previously.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah,  
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*



﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ﴿٢﴾ نَزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ مِنْ قَبْلُ هَدَى لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٤﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٥﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١-٦)

3:1. Alif. Lâ. Meem.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Groups of letters (*al-huroof al-muqatta'ah*) appear at the beginning of several soorahs. The most correct scholarly view states that we are required to believe in them as they appear to be, without delving into their meaning, knowledge of which we should leave to Allah. We believe that =



- 3:2. Allah: there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining.
- 3:3. He has sent down to you the Book in truth, confirming what came before it; and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel
- 3:4. before this, as a guide to humankind, and He sent down the criterion [between right and wrong]. Then those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah will suffer a severe punishment, and Allah is Almighty, an Avenger.
- 3:5. From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens.
- 3:6. He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He wills. There is no god but He, the Almighty, the Most Wise.

Allah (ﷻ) begins this soorah by telling us of His divinity and that He is God and there is no god but He; no devotion or worship should be directed to anyone but Him. Everything other than Him that is worshipped is false; Allah is the true God Who has the divine attributes that are inherently implied in these two names. The Ever-Living is the One Who has life in the most perfect sense, which implies all attributes without which life cannot be complete or perfect, such as hearing, seeing, power, strength, greatness, eternal life, and unsurpassable might. The Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining is the One Who sustains Himself and has no need of any of His creation, and the One Who sustains all others. All created beings need Him to be brought into existence, to be formed and shaped, and to be sustained. He is the One Who controls the affairs of all creatures, body, mind and soul. One aspect of His sustaining and caring for His slaves and showing mercy towards them is that He sent down to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) the Book, which is the greatest and holiest of the Books, containing truth in its stories, commands and prohibitions. What He says is truth and what He ordains is justice. He sent it down in truth so that people would worship their Lord and learn His Book.

= they were not revealed in vain, and that there is wisdom behind them of which we are not aware.

«confirming what came before it» of the previous books. So it is a judge over them; what it confirms is to be accepted and what it refutes is to be rejected. What you find in the Qur'an of rulings that all previous Messengers agreed upon you will find in other books too, and these (previous books) testify that the Qur'an is truly from Allah. But the People of the Book cannot truly believe in their books if they do not believe in the Qur'an; their disbelief in it undermines their belief in their own books.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says: «and He sent down the Torah» to Moosâ «and the Gospel» to 'Eesâ

«before this» that is, before the sending down of the Qur'an «as a guide to humankind». The apparent meaning of this phrase is that it refers to everything mentioned previously, that is, Allah sent down the Qur'an, the Torah and the Gospel as a guide to humankind to steer them away from misguidance, so whoever accepts the guidance of Allah is guided, and whoever does not accept it will remain misguided. «and He sent down the criterion [between right and wrong]» that is, definitive arguments, proof and evidence that point to the right path. Thus Allah explains what people need to know, so that the rulings will remain clear and no one will have any excuse or argument for not believing in Allah and His revelations. Hence He says: «Then those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah» that is, after He has explained them, and made them clear and removed any ambiguity «will suffer a severe punishment» that no one can imagine how severe it is or comprehend its nature. «and Allah is Almighty» that is, powerful, and nothing is beyond Him «an Avenger» against those who disobey Him.

«From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens». This is an affirmation that His knowledge encompasses all things, manifest and hidden, visible and invisible, including the foetus in the womb that cannot be seen by other created beings, and of which they have no knowledge at the time when He is caring for it in the