

Fast 7: Humanity-wide approach of *Surah Fatiha* (1st chapter of the Quran)

- The Holy Quran opens as follows in its first chapter, *Al-Fatiha*:

“Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds” (1:1)

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

- The word translated as “Lord” is *Rabb*, which means one who **fosters** something to a state of perfection through various stages of development. The words for “Lord of the worlds” are *Rabb-ul- 'Alamīn*. This means that Allah acts as Lord for **all that is in any kind of world, i.e., anywhere in this universe**. Here we will take “worlds” as referring to all nations of humanity, although more generally it applies to all other worlds, for example, the animal world.
- Explaining the significance of Allah as being the Lord of all nations, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote as follows in his very last writing in May 1908:
 - “Our God has not withheld His bounty from any people. The powers and faculties which He bestowed on the ancient peoples of India, have also been bestowed on the Arabs, the Persians, the Syrians, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Europeans and the Americans. **For all of them**, the earth of God serves as a floor, and for all of them His sun, moon, and stars give light, and also perform other functions. **All of them** derive benefit from the air, water, fire, earth and other things created by God, and all of them use the produce of the earth, its corn and its herbs, its flowers and its fruits. **These liberal ways of God teach us that we also should do good to all mankind, and should not be narrow-minded, nor limit our sympathy.**”
 - “Opening the Holy Quran with this verse, which embodies such breadth of view, is a reply to those nations who limit, each to itself, the universal bounty and providence of God, and regard other peoples as though they were not a creation of God, or as though, having once been created, they have since been completely forsaken and forgotten by Him.”
 - “It needs no argument, therefore, to say that the True and Perfect God in whom we must all believe is **the Lord of all the worlds**. His care is not limited to any particular people or any particular age. Rather, He is the Lord of all peoples, all ages, and all lands. He is the fountain-head of all grace, the source of all power, physical and spiritual. He nourishes all His creation; and on Him depends everything that exists. **His grace is universal and is spread over all peoples, all countries and all ages.**”

- Therefore the Quran opens by addressing all human beings generally and Muslims specifically. Here, and elsewhere also, the Quran informs everyone, whoever they may be, about its principles and it guides its own followers on how to act in order to put the principles into practical effect. In this case, humanity is informed that God is the Lord and Carer of all of them, and Muslims repeatedly recite this short chapter to remind themselves of the ways of God and to behave in the world with the same outlook as God’s outlook on this world.
- Are we Muslims first or are we human being first and then Muslims? There may be more than one good answer to this question. One answer is: We are Muslims for the very reason that we can learn from Islam how to be human beings first! Without the guidance of the broad teachings of the Quran, a person will fall back on his narrow racial, tribal, national, religious prejudices and look down upon others as lesser mortals.
- The Quran says:

“And the Jews and the Christians say: We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones. Say (to them): Why does He then punish you for your sins? Rather, you are mortals from among those whom He has created.”
(5:18)

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصْرَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ

This applies to all those who claim to be the favourites of God, including Muslims. Jews and Christians are only mentioned as examples. Strangely, all such claimants also admit that they are punished by God! The Bible again and again mentions the transgressions of the Jews and the resulting punishment of God upon them. Muslims today lament over their woes, saying how they are suffering all kinds of disasters everywhere. The Quran says to all such people: If you are the selected ones of God, why is He bringing this distress upon you? The answer is: **All of you are mortals like anyone else.** If you do good, you will gain, and if you do wrong, you will suffer.

Christian critics of the Quran say that the Prophet Muhammad misunderstood what they mean by calling Jesus as “son of God”. They say they mean it spiritually and metaphorically, not physically, and that the Prophet Muhammad, being unlearned, did not realize that the term “son of God” can also be used in these fine and subtle senses. However, the above verse clearly shows that the Holy Prophet was perfectly aware that “sons of Allah” can be used as meaning “His beloved ones”. The Holy Prophet never thought for a moment that they were claiming to be sons of God physically.