

## QS 1 Q 1:1–7

1.1 In the name of God,  
Merciful to all, Compassionate to each!  
1.2 Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds:  
1.3 Merciful to all,  
Compassionate to each!  
1.4 Lord of the Day of Judgment.  
1.5 It is You we worship, and upon You we call  
for help.  
1.6 Guide us to the Straight Path,  
1.7 The path of those upon whom Your grace  
abounds,  
Not those upon whom Your anger falls,  
Nor those who are lost.

1.1 Au nom d'Allah, le Tout Miséricordieux, le  
Très Miséricordieux.  
1.2 Louange à Allah, Seigneur de l'univers.  
1.3 Le Tout Miséricordieux, le Très Miséricor-  
dieux,  
1.4 Maître du Jour de la rétribution.  
1.5 C'est Toi [Seul] que nous adorons, et c'est  
Toi [Seul] dont nous implorons secours.  
1.6 Guide-nous dans le droit chemin,  
1.7 le chemin de ceux que Tu as comblés de fa-  
veurs, non pas de ceux qui ont encouru Ta co-  
lère, ni des égarés.

سورة الفاتحة  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (1) الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (2) الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمِ (3) مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (4) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ  
(5) اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (6) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (7)

### Azaiez

La *Fātiḥa* est le seul chapitre coranique dont nous ayons deux versions appochantes qui n'ont pas été compilées dans le *muṣḥaf* d'aujourd'hui. Ces deux versions intitulées respectivement *al-ḥal'* (« le reniement ») et *al-ḥafd* (« la course ») auraient appartenues à deux corpus ou *muṣḥaf* aujourd'hui perdus, celui d'Ubayy et celui d'Ibn 'Abbās (Blachère 1959: 189–190 ; Crapon de Craona 1981: 506–507; Nöldeke & Schwally *GdQ*<sup>2</sup>: 34–35; Sfar 2000: 44–45; Jeffery 1939: 158–162). S'agissant de la sourate *al-ḥafd*, Crapon de Craona s'est employé à démontrer sa facture coranique en la rapprochant stylistiquement de la sourate *al Fātiḥa* (elle-même absente de la recension d'Ibn Mas'ūd). Au-delà des convergences thématique et stylistique, Crapon de Craona écrit : « Sur le plan purement métrique, les deux prières ont incontestablement une allure coranique » (Crapon de Craona 1981: 508). La question qui demeure ici est la raison pour laquelle ces deux prières furent exclues et la *Fātiḥa* préservée dans la vulgate dite de 'Uṭmān. Si la question reste débattue (Sfar 2000: 44–45), ces divergences soulignent que rien ne permet d'affirmer avec certitude que l'événement du discours coranique fut transposé scrupuleusement et dans sa totalité dans le texte que nous connaissons aujourd'hui. La présence de la *Fātiḥa* rappelle, au contraire, combien le Coran a une histoire complexe. Cette histoire a été définitivement marquée par la prééminence d'un *muṣḥaf* sur d'autres (cf. Ṭabarī *Annales* VI: 2952. On peut y lire : *wa-qālū kāna al-Qur'ān kutub<sup>am</sup> fa-taraktahā illā wāḥid<sup>am</sup>*), et par la perte d'un Coran intégral (Suyūṭī: II, 46. On peut y lire : *qad ḍahaba minhu Qur'ān<sup>un</sup> kaṭīr<sup>un</sup>*). Ainsi, les données mêmes transmises par la tradition corroborent

pour le moins ce constat. Sur ce point, on lira les pages instructives de Burton (1979: 117 ff.) et Amir-Moezzi (2010: 1–16).

### Cuypers

La première sourate du Coran, *al-Fātiḥa*, est un parfait exemple de sourate construite conformément à la rhétorique sémitique, sur la base de correspondances binaires.

– <sup>1</sup> Au nom de Dieu,	<i>le Très-Miséricordieux, le Miséricordieux.</i>
= <sup>2</sup> Louange à Dieu,	<b>Seigneur des mondes,</b>
– <sup>3</sup>	<i>le Très-Miséricordieux, le Miséricordieux.</i>
= <sup>4</sup>	<b>Maître du Jour du Jugement</b>

+ <sup>5a</sup> <i>Toi</i>	nous adorons
+ <sup>b</sup> <i>et Toi</i>	nous sollicitons.

– <sup>6</sup> Guide-nous	dans <b>la voie</b> droite,
– <sup>7a</sup> <b>la voie</b>	de ceux que tu as gratifiés,
= <sup>b</sup> <i>non</i>	[de ceux qui] ont encouru la colère,
= <sup>c</sup> <i>ni</i>	des égarés.

Les quatre premiers versets se regroupent en deux segments parallèles de deux membres chacun (1–2 // 3–4). Les premiers membres (1 et 3) sont partiellement identiques ; les deuxièmes (2 et 4) sont synonymes. Les quatre derniers membres (6–7) forment deux segments parallèles de deux membres chacun (6–7a et 7b–c). Ils opposent la voie droite (6–7a) à celle des égarés (7b–c). Au centre (5), figure un segment de deux membres complémentaires, donnant le sens de toute la sourate : « Toi, nous adorons » (5a) renvoie à ce qui précède, qui est une prière d’adoration ; « et Toi nous sollicitons » (5b) annonce la suite, qui est une prière de demande. Ainsi, la sourate unit adoration et demande, les deux formes fondamentales et complémentaires de la prière.

Il y a une forte similitude entre cette sourate qui sert de prière d’introduction au Coran, et le Psaume 1 qui introduit au livre du Psautier. Les deux textes sont pareillement construits de manière concentrique (ABA’), forme très courante dans la rhétorique sémitique ; et la thématique des deux voies, développée dans le dernier morceau de la *Fātiḥa*, est celle de l’ensemble du Psaume 1. La fin des deux textes est quasiment la même : « ... ni des égarés » (*Fātiḥa* 1:7c) // « la voie des impies se perd » (Ps 1:6).

Avec les sourates 113 et 114, la sourate *al-Fātiḥa* forme un encadrement liturgique pour le texte du Coran. La très ancienne recension d’Ibn Mas’ūd ne les contenait pas, signe probable de leur introduction relativement tardive dans le Livre.

## Dye

Poème liturgique, à connotation eschatologique (v. 4). On y trouve de nombreuses réminiscences bibliques, par exemple autour de l'opposition entre le droit chemin, ou le chemin des justes, et le chemin des égarés (cf. v. 6 / Ps 1:6 et Isa 35:8). Le propos de la *Fātiḥa*, ainsi que son statut et son rôle dans le culte musulman, invitent à une comparaison avec diverses prières chrétiennes ou juives : le *Pater Noster*, mais aussi le Psaume 1 (comme texte liminaire d'un corpus, cf. Cuypers 2004) ou l'*enarxis* de la liturgie de Jean Chrysostome (comme poème destiné à être chanté au début d'un office religieux, cf. Neuwirth & Neuwirth 1991).

Le v. 5 opère une transition remarquable : *iyyāka na'budu* fait référence aux vv. 1–4, et *iyyāka nasta'in* annonce les versets suivants. Par son contenu, mais aussi par le subtil changement rythmique et phonétique qu'il introduit, notamment dans ses premières syllabes, ce verset évoque un répons psalmodique (cf. Van Reeth 2006: 520–521). Autrement dit, dans le cadre du probable *Sitz im Leben* originel de la sourate, les vv. 1–4 apparaissent comme une doxologie, psalmodiée par le célébrant principal, à laquelle répond la prière d'invocation que constituent les vv. 5–7, psalmodiés par l'assemblée, ou par un autre célébrant. Cette division de la sourate permet de rendre compte du changement de personne dans l'adresse à Dieu : les vv. 1–4 parlent de Dieu à la troisième personne du singulier, alors que les versets suivants en parlent à la deuxième personne du singulier.

Le v. 7 est nettement plus long que les versets précédents, et il marque, dans sa seconde partie (*ḡayri l-maḡdūbi 'alayhim wa-lā l-ḡāllīn*), une *profonde* rupture de rythme par rapport au reste de la sourate. Il est très tentant d'y voir un ajout postérieur. On notera par ailleurs le raccord entre le v. 6 (*ihdinā l-ṣirāṭa l-mustaḡīm*) et Q 2:2 (*ḡālika l-kitābu lā rayba fihi hudan li-l-muttaḡīn*), par des motifs thématique (la guidance) et phonétique (*mustaḡīm/muttaḡīn*, cf. Dye 2014:155–158, 164).

## Hilali

A large number of apocryphal Islamic traditions (*mawḡū'* pl. *mawḡū'āt*) are dedicated to the interpretation and to the “extension” of the *Fātiḥa*. The contrast between the length of this chapter and the expansive aspect of its exegesis is striking. It is a closed/open text. There is a sort of amplification of its importance in the exegesis as well as in the ritual performances that replace in a way the ambiguity of its status in the section of the Qur'ān. In the manuscript 27.1, Ṣan'ā', this chapter is missing in the upper text as well as in the lower text.

## Imbert

La plus ancienne mention épigraphique de la sourate *al-Fātiḥā* entière et dans l'ordre canonique des versets remonte à la période omeyyade. Il ne s'agit pas d'une inscription mais d'un graffito, œuvre d'un personnage anonyme. Gravé sur un bloc de basalte, ce graffito coranique proviendrait du site de *Ḥirbat al-Samrā'* (35 kilomètres

au nord-est d'Amman, en Jordanie) dans la région d'al-Zarqā'. Le bloc aurait été déposé dans l'église d'al-Zarqā' avant de rejoindre la collection privée du Patriarcat d'Amman, où nous l'avons étudiée et photographiée en 1993.

Le bloc est de petite taille (39 x 23 cm) et compte 12 lignes d'écriture gravée avec une extrême finesse. Le style de la graphie est apparenté au coufique anguleux archaïque d'époque omeyyade qui se caractérise notamment par des allongements et étirements de caractères. L'écriture ne porte, bien sûr, aucun point diacritique ni aucune voyelle ou signe de lecture. L'analyse paléographique reste notre seul moyen de dater ce texte: en comparaison avec d'autres graffiti de même facture, nous proposons de le dater de la première moitié du ii<sup>e</sup> siècle de l'Hégire soit entre 720 et 750 environ.

La sourate est clairement introduite par la mention de la *basmala* entière et développée. Le texte est conforme en tout point à celui de la vulgate. On relève deux écarts d'orthographe: à la ligne 6, le personnage a gravé un *ṭā'* au lieu d'un *ṣād* dans le mot *ṣirāṭ* (écrit *ṭirāṭ*) ; à la ligne 7, il a écrit *al-n'amta* au lieu de *an'amta*. Dans la logique de la *scriptio defectiva*, il ne note pas les *alif* dans les expressions *rabb al-(ā)lamīn et wa-lā l-ḏ(ā)llīn*.

L'extrait coranique occupe 9 lignes sur les 12 ; dans les trois dernières lignes, après la sourate, se trouve une invocation en faveur du personnage qui a gravé le texte (*Allāhumma iḡfir li-Rabāḥ b. Ḥayyān wa-li-wāliḏayhi wa-li-mā waladā wa-li-man qara'a hādā l-kitāb wa-qāla Āmīn Āmīn rabb al-'ālamīn* : "ô Dieu pardonne à *Rabāḥ b. Ḥayyān* ainsi qu'à ses parents et à ceux qu'ils ont enfantés, à celui qui lira cette inscription et dira Amen, Amen, Seigneur des mondes!").

L'épigraphie et la graffitologie n'ont pas encore fourni d'attestations de versets de la sourate *al-Fātiḥa* antérieurs à celui que nous présentons. De fait, ce graffiti est sans doute l'une des premières matérialisations de ces versets, à l'époque où ils commencèrent à connaître un statut particulier au sein de la communauté des musulmans. Alors qu'il est devenu un verset emblématique récité en de nombreuses occasions, son extrême rareté en épigraphie ancienne est plus qu'étonnante. Elle pose la question du statut de ces versets ou de ces groupes de versets au sein même de la vulgate coranique.

### Kropp

Q 1 is clearly (*mubīn* in its correct sense! Kropp 2014) a prayer, related to the magic prayers (Q 113; 114). As prayers they are not of the same nature as the rest of the corpus, but stand in normal position (beginning and end) in a religious compilation.

Much has been said about the parallels between Biblical texts, Jewish and Christian prayers and the *Fātiḥa*. One should not forget, though, that here most basic statements of faith are to be expressed. Seen in the general situation of monotheistic religions in the 6th, 7th centuries CE and their interactions and common roots, this prayer cannot be too deviant from others of the same kind.

The question whether the *Fātiḥa* is part of the “revelation” is a theological question, irrelevant to a philologist and historian. For the scientist there are only human texts of different kind and functions. All else is faith which cannot be discussed. However, the question why and how human beings believe certain texts to be divine may be an object of research in several fields of scientific research.

The *Fātiḥa*, the last two *sūras* and Q 112 have a good chance to be the oldest documented pieces of religious texts in Arabic, possibly pre-Qur’ānic.

Variants to the text are important as the substitution of *ṣirāṭ* by *sabīl*, clearly a *lectio facilior* (Jeffery 1939: 159). But one has to remark that *ṣirāṭ* and its variant forms probably do not derive from Latin *strata* as the development of the Latin (and Greek) consonant cluster *S-T-R* in other words proves and do not mean “path, street.” *Ṣirāṭ* is derived from the root *S-Ṭ-R* by metathesis and emphasis of *S* to *Ṣ* (as attested in Syriac). Furthermore *ṣirāṭ* “line” is an adverbial exponent, *ṣirāṭ mustaqīm* meaning “straight, straightforward.” The parallel to Psalm 1 is weak then, though there is the same linguistic device (“path of the just”). Translating sacred texts there is a tendency to literal translation which produces false results in the target language.

A remark on the *basma*: it is a Biblical citation (Exod 34:6; Ps 86[85]:15 and *passim*) in use already in pre-Islamic times till today by Coptic and Ethiopic Christians (even if *teutisca non leguntur*; cf. Kropp 2013).

### Madigan

As the text stands, it is an elegant and neatly rounded prayer of praise and invocation, that can easily be considered in isolation from the corpus of the Qur’ān. Though it is traditionally given the title *fātiḥat al-kitāb*, there is nothing in particular about it that would indicate any role in relation to a corpus of scripture (as distinct, for example, from the opening of the next *sūra* with its evocation of *al-kitāb*). Of course one can discern in these verses’ vocabulary and in the stark differentiation of the two ways an epitome of the Qur’ānic worldview. However, the division into three groups (the graced, those under wrath, and those who are astray), which most translations and *tafāsīr* prefer, can seem forced. Abdel Haleem in his translation takes the latter two attributes as glosses on “those whom you have graced,” as had Yusuf Ali before him. That is, those whom God has graced are no longer under wrath (note the impersonal form of *al-maḡḍūb* ‘*alayhim*, which is often ignored in translations) nor are they any longer wandering about aimlessly. Interestingly there is nothing about the *sūra* which indicates a divine speaker or a privileged human addressee – in the canonical ordering of the text the question of who precisely the speaker might be and who the singular addressee is only raised in the fourth verse of *al-Baqara*, where a second-person singular possessive is used.

### Pregill

Succinctly and elegantly encompasses the major themes of the scripture: monotheism, praise, eschatology, worship and supplication, guidance, and the gulf that yawns between the damned and the saved. These are characteristic concerns of the period in which the Qurʾān was revealed, and thus the *Fātiḥa* clearly communicates exactly why the text must be understood in the cultural and religious context of Late Antiquity. The selection of this *sūra* as the opening to the canonical scripture is hardly surprising – if it was not deliberately composed specifically for this purpose.

V. 1: *Allāh*: the universal name for the one God in Arabic; *al-Raḥmān*, the proper name for God in Yemenite monotheism, perhaps derived from Jewish usages (see Jomier 1957 and Rippin 1991); *al-raḥīm*, the merciful, perhaps a gloss on *al-Raḥmān*. “In the name of God, Raḥmān, [that is,] the Merciful One.”

The oscillation between Allāh and al-Raḥmān as divine names has always struck me as similar to that between Elohim and YHWH in the Pentateuch, with Allāh/al-Lāh al-Raḥmān reminiscent of the compromise formulation YHWH-Elohim. On al-Raḥmān as the particular name (≈ YHWH) and Allāh as the more generic (≈ Elohim), cf. Q 20:90: “Aaron had said, ‘O my people, you are only being tested with it [viz., the Golden Calf], however, your lord is al-Raḥmān.’” This seems like an allusion to the Biblical precursor: “Aaron made proclamation and said, ‘A feast dedicated to YHWH tomorrow’” (Exod 32:5).

Vv. 6–7: the most quintessentially late antique gesture of the entire *sūra*. The revelatory community is on the straight path; others are objects of wrath or led astray. Communal sclerosis: society is divided into believers and infidels, without any room in between – the most characteristic mark of the shift from classical antiquity to the empires of faith that dominated medieval life (see Brown 1989: 172–187). Cf. Donner 2010 on the fluidity of the Qurʾānic community – the nominal boundaries between Believers, Christians, and Jews can be transcended, but not the behavioral boundaries established and upheld by true monotheists.

Traditional interpretation says that those who receive *ḡaḍab* are Jews, those characterized by *ḡalāla* are Christians. Perhaps this is *tafsīr*, perhaps not; *ḡaḍab* does seem to be consistently associated with *Banū Isrāʾīl* in the Qurʾān. Is it possible to determine if *ḡalāla* is predominantly associated with the doctrinal excesses of Christians?

### Rippin

The prayer function of the passage emerges from its speaking voice, dissonant within the context of most of the Qurʾān. That might suggest a separate composition for strictly liturgical purposes (as opposed to the doctrinal and potentially liturgical purpose of others sections). It also draws attention to the artificiality of the use of *qul* to deflect this voice elsewhere in the text.

The parallel to the Lord’s Prayer has often been pointed out but that would seem to be more relevant in terms of function and prominence than in content. In making

that comparison, the absence of the divine-human symbol of the family in the Qur'ān is notable. Much of the vocabulary in the passage has Hebrew/Syriac parallels – Noldeke's treatment is extensive (*GdQ*<sup>2</sup> I, 111ff) – with special attention to *raḥmān* and *'ālam*, but also to most other phrases in one way or another.

An interesting textual issue arises which may reflect the late emerging canonization of this prayer (but may be the result of other technical factors to do with the inscription): the inscription in the Dome of the Rock has sometimes been said to include v. 2 (as well as v. 1, the *basmala*, of course) on the South-east portion of the outer inscription (where the name of the founding caliph is found). However, it actually reads *rabb al-'ālamīn li-llāh al-ḥamd*, thus effectively being the verse in reverse.

### Sirry

Why is this chapter (*sūra*) named *al-fātiḥa*, which means the opening? As is known, the word *fataḥa* (to open) and its derivatives do not occur in this *sūra*. It is most likely that this *sūra* is named so because of its being the first chapter of the Qur'ān, though it is not some sort of introduction to the Qur'ān. Interestingly, this *sūra* along with the last two *sūras* of the Qur'ān, known as *al-mu'awwadatayn* (because they begin with “*qal a'ūdū*”), are missing in Ibn Mas'ūd's codex. In terms of its content, this opening *sūra* takes the form of a prayer. As such, the speaker in the entire *sūra* is the reciter/reader. This *sūra* sets forth fundamental teachings of the Qur'ān. It begins with addressing God by those very attributes whose manifestations surround one all the time. The *sūra* seems to establish the powerful image of God vis-à-vis the powerless human beings. However, in between the two contrasting images lies the contested issue of the extent to which humans can attain in their life. The powerful God is described with the two most frequent attributes mentioned in the Qur'ān, namely *raḥmān* and *raḥīm*, as well as two attributes that signify his authority in this world (*rabb al-'ālamīn*) and his absolute mastery of the hereafter (*mālik yawm al-dīn*). The interplay between *raḥmān* and *raḥīm* is intriguing. In a number of verses, the Qur'ān uses the former as a synonym of Allah, suggesting that *raḥmān* has an exclusively divine connotation. One of such striking verses is “Say: Call upon Allah or call upon *raḥmān*” (Q 17:110). It has been pointed out by scholars that that *raḥmān* was the name given to the God of the heavens worshipped in pre-Islamic Yemen and central Arabia. However, it seems that the latter (*raḥīm*) does not acquire such a status in the Qur'ān. The recognition of God's power is then followed by human declaration of obedience and submission. This opening *sūra* ends by situating human existence within the salvation history. The transition from praising God and entering into history, the speaker seeks guidance, “Guide us to the straight path” (v. 5). This straight path (*ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) is a universal gift from God. It is not exclusive to any race or any people or religious group and is not exclusively delivered in any particular language. The notion of guidance is central to the Qur'ānic understanding of salvation. The Qur'ān often refers to guidance (*hudā* or *hidāya*) as the most inclusive concept



used to express God's initiative for humanity's salvation. How would God guide human beings to the straight path? This question has occupied Muslim scholars from the early period of Islam to modern times. Certainly the answer to the above question is more complex than simply delineating two mutually exclusive ways, namely, through revelation or reason. Furthermore, while seeking His guidance, the speaker identifies with certain figures in the drama of history, i.e., "those on whom your grace was bestowed" on the one hand, and on the other, "those on whom your anger fell" or "those who went astray." This identification with the righteous and rejection or condemnation of the evildoers becomes a central theme in the Qur'ān. Thus, one's salvation does not depend on his/her belonging to a particular race, creed, or group but on his/her own right belief and right action (Q 2:62; 5:69).

### Stefanidis

Using the voice of the believer rather than that of God, this *sūra* differs from the rest of the Qur'ānic text by its tone which does not convey the same dramatic and polemical tension so characteristic of the Qur'ān. The *Fātiḥa* presents a rather clear and condensed theological discourse (vv. 1–4), followed by a liturgical supplication (vv. 5–7) which has parallels in other monotheistic traditions. The two parts that compose this *sūra* are marked by a change of address: in vv. 1–4 God is referred to in the third person, whereas in vv. 5–7 God is directly addressed by use of the second person.

The above, together with the use of the first person plural (*iḥdīnā, na'budu*) rather than the more intimate singular (cf. Ps 27: 11), would indicate that this carefully composed *sūra* had an important liturgical function in the early Muslim community. If that is the case, we would have access through this *sūra* to the core theological concepts of early Islam: *rabb al-'ālamīn, yawm al-dīn, al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* etc.

### Tesei

The opening *sūra* presents substantial differences compared to most of the Qur'ānic texts. For instance, the basmala is counted among the verses and the *sūra* is not named after a word it contains. As other scholars have already noticed, the invocation at vv. 5–7 is directly formulated by the believer (or by the community of the believers) without being introduced by the typical Qur'ānic *qul*. Thus, the text here does not seem to claim to be emitted by God. It is also noticeable that, unlike the titles *al-raḥmān, al-raḥīm* and *rabb al-'ālamīna*, that of *mālik yawm al-dīn* does not appear elsewhere in the Qur'ān. The possibility that *al-Fātiḥa* represents a composition independent from the rest of the corpus is a concrete one. From this perspective, Cuypers' observation about the parallelism between Q 1 and the Ps 1 appears to be of great importance. In fact, the evocation of an opening text would suggest that *al-Fātiḥa* was composed with a similar specific aim, i.e., to open the Qur'ān. In other words, the composition of the opening *sūra* would be part of a real redactional proc-



ess operated by scribes. Neuwirth & Neuwirth (1991) maintain the view of several classical commentators, according to whom al-Fātiḥa is alluded to in the seven *maṭānī* mentioned in Q 15:87: *wa-laqaḍ ātaynāka sab'an min al-maṭānī wa-l-qur'āna l-'aẓīm*. This would point to an early composition of the *sūra*. However, it seems to me more probable that al-Fātiḥa was composed at a later date, when the idea of collecting/redacting the Qur'ān had already been developed.

### Toorawa

Aspects of the *Fātiḥa* that are of special interest to me include:

[1] The typically Qur'ānic change in person (*iltifāt*): third person (*al-ḥamdu li-llāh*, “all praise to God”), second person (*iyyāka na'budu*, “it is you we worship”), first person (*ihdinā*, “guide us”).

[2] The fact that the Prophet Muḥammad's personal voice is not really implicated. Indeed, there is no second person singular addressee other than the deity, and the first person speaker is plural, leading me to think not of a nascent community engaging in a liturgy, but rather of a group of initiates far more comfortable with the cosmic terms in which the deity is described. I imagine adepts, prophets, angels.

[3] The unusual use of the impersonal in *gayri l-mağḍūbi 'alayhim wa-lā l-ḍāllīn* (“not those angered with, nor those straying”), especially as that use might relate to rhyme, something that is undoubtedly the case with the use of *iyyāka* (“it is you”) earlier in order to produce first *na'budu* (“we worship”) and then *nasta'in* (“we ask for help”).

I also think it is worth asking how this *sūra* is part of the Qur'ān, whether it is a *sūra* «proprement dit.» It seems to me that the Qur'ānic message, as it were, begins with the opening lines of the second *sūra* (Q 2), and not this one, which strikes me as being exactly what its name (*Fātiḥa*) suggests, namely a prolegomenon, something preparatory, providing entry into something else (and which is later ritualized in its capacity as an ‘opener’).

Much has been written about the *basmala* (the opening pious phrase to all but one of the Qur'ān's *sūras*) being an integral part of the *sūra*. Just as there is a question about the relationship of the *basmala* to the verses that follow it, for me there is a question about the relationship of this “*sūra*” to the rest of the Qur'ān.

### Winitzer

The opening divine epithet may contain an echo of the self-disclosure by Israel's deity to Moses in Exod 34:6–7 (esp. *'el raḥûm*, “a merciful God”). Rabbinic Judaism took this Biblical passage to describe the 13 attributes of mercy (*middôt*) of Israel's deity (*b. Roš Haš. 17b*), most dealing with justice; in turn this became the source text for a central theological tenet in Judaism, something recited regularly in the synagogue, especially in contexts of judgment (e. g., Yom Kippur), as a proclamation of

the divine's preeminence. Its place and knowledge by those disputing Jewish theological claims thus cannot be ignored.

### Younes

Two comments:

[1] The spelling of the first word of the *sūra* suggests an original Hebrew or Syriac connection. In Arabic, the word meaning “name” is written with an initial *alif*: اسم. The basmala seems to be the only exception in the language where this particular spelling is found.

[2] The last verse (v. 7) has the hallmarks of an addition to an originally coherent and otherwise well-written passage. As I will show in my comments on other passages, one shared feature of what I argue to be additions is the inclusion of a negative element and the threat of punishment in a verse that is typically much longer than other verses of a well-written original set.

### Zellentin

*Al-Fātiḥa* recasts major psalmic and prophetic themes; especially the references to Ps 1 (see Cuypers) and Isa 35 (see Dye) seem helpful. Yet the Qur’ān addresses scripture by taking into account how it was understood by its Late Ancient contemporaries. Casting the community as belonging to the camp of either good or evil, and juxtaposing a path for each, is of course a topos universally shared by Jews, Christians, and others, yet nowhere does such language feature as distinctly as in the Judaeo-Christian literature.

The conceptuality of *ṣirāṭa llaḍīna an’amta ‘alayhim*, “the way of those on whom you have bestowed grace” as opposed to those *al-maḡḍūbi ‘alayhim*, “on whom you have bestowed wrath,” and who are *al-ḍāllīna*, “astray,” in v. 7, may best be understood as addressed to an audience that is familiar with the Judaeo-Christian “Two-Ways” doctrine. (This holds true even if we construct the way of the wicked ones as an explanation, *via negativa*, of the way of the good ones, as Madigan suggests: Q 37:23 informs us about the complementary *ṣirāṭ al-ḡaḥīm*, the path to hell.) The cognate image of a path of life and a path of death is attested already in Qumran and in early Jewish and Christian literature; it also features elsewhere in the Qur’ān as I discuss in my comments on QS 44. The formulation of the “Two Ways” that should be resounding most forcefully in one’s ear when hearing the Qur’ān, here and in Q 90, may be the one preserved in the *Clementine Homilies*, which puts it as follows: “These good and evil deeds I knowingly declare to you as two ways. Those strolling down the one will *perish*, while those trekking the other will be rescued. For the way of those who will perish is wide and smooth—*it ruins them without troubling them*. The way of those who will be *saved*, however, is narrow and difficult—but will finally save those braving its difficulties. Before these two

ways stand *Unbelief and Faith*. Setting out in Unbelief are those who ... have forgotten Judgment Day” (*Clementine Homilies* 7.6–8, my emphases).

The literary affinities between *al-Fātiḥa* and the *Clementine Homilies* are limited, encompassing concepts shared by the Jewish and Christian tradition more broadly: two paths, condemnation, and the judgement day (v. 4). Yet if we cast the intertextual net more widely throughout the Qur’ān, a much more specific affinity emerges. The *Homilies*’ main point that the path of the good is difficult (“steep”) is evoked in Q 90:11. Theologically, both the Qur’ān and the Judaeo-Christian text combine the concept of human choice with a sense that God has already sealed the fate of individuals. Elsewhere, e. g., in Q 2:10, God is portrayed as amplifying both good and evil inclinations, leading to a clear judgment at the end of time, a concept cognate to the *Clementine Homilies* as well, esp. in *Homilies* 2 and 3. All this, of course, does not amount to an argument of literary “influence.” Rather, the *Clementine Homilies* constitute secondary evidence for a cluster of teachings that the Qur’ān presupposes part of its audience to know, and part of it newly to embrace, preserving and transforming the Judaeo-Christian tradition.