

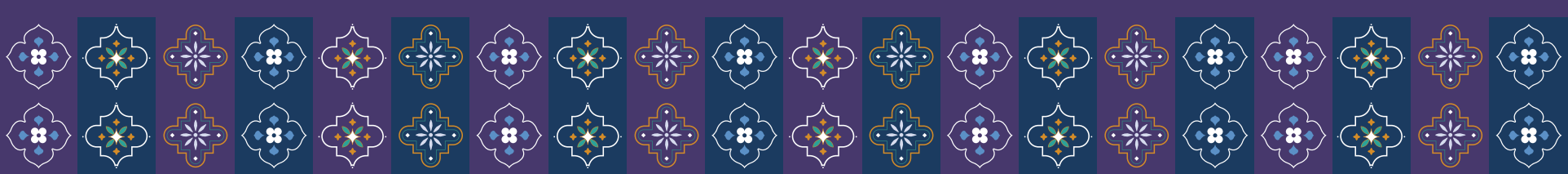


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# Understanding The Opening Chapter of the Quran **Al Fatihah**



The first chapter of the Quran is known as the Opening Chapter (Surah al-Fatiha). The fact that it contains the first words that open the Quran makes it almost like an introduction that sets the theme and tone for the rest of the Quran.

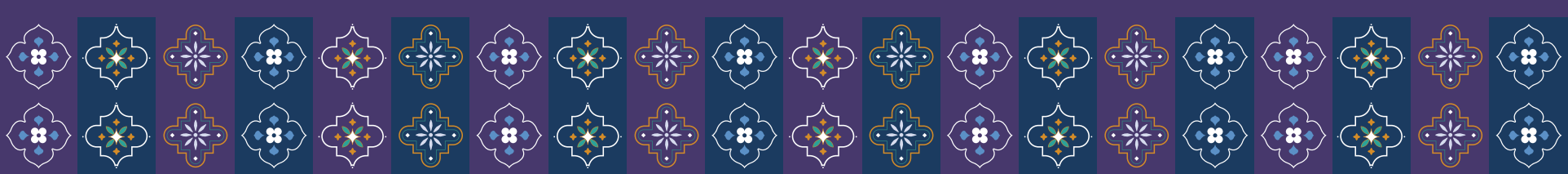




# Importance of the Opening Chapter

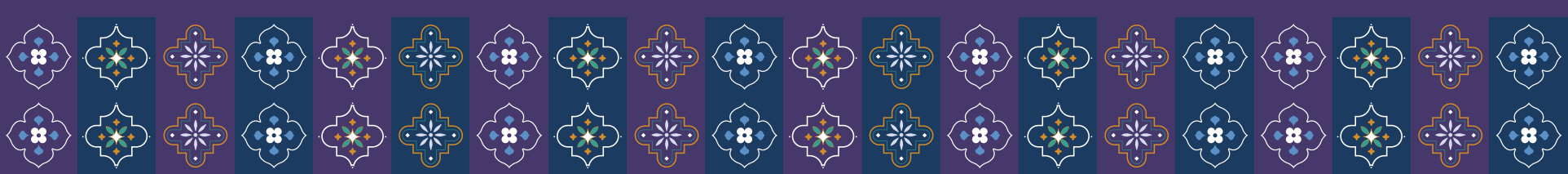
It is mentioned in many statements of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, wherein its importance and virtues are detailed. One of its many names is “the Mother of the Quran.” This refers to it being its foundation and beginning.

In one event, the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ asked a disciple of his about the greatest chapter of the Quran. The disciple replied that he didn't know what that referred to. The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ responded that it was the Opening Chapter. He then referred to it as “the seven oft-repeated Passages.” This is because this chapter contains seven passages, but also because it is repeated a minimum of 17 times a day with the obligatory prescribed ritual devotions.





The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ recommended it as an incantation that can be read over someone when they are sick or unwell, to help them get better. Thus, it is a form of spiritual cure. In another teaching, an angel descended from heaven and said to Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, “Receive the glad tidings of the two lights that have been given to you that no Messenger before you received; the Opening Chapter and the last two Passages of the Chapter of the Cow (i.e. 2:285-286). You will not read a word from them except that it will benefit you.”

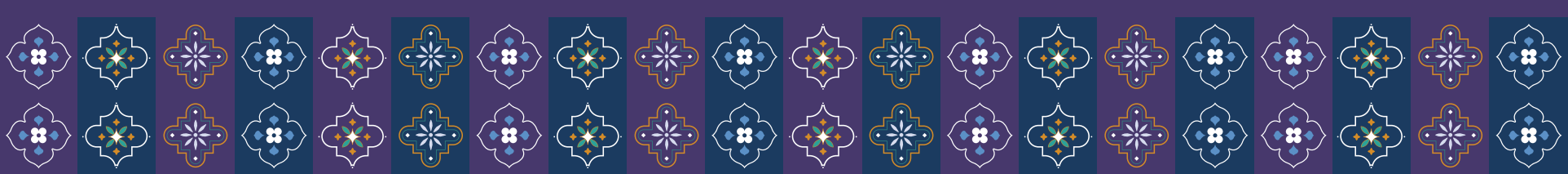






## Divided In Half: Half for Allah and Half for the Servant

The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ said: "Allah, the Glorious and Exalted, has said: 'I have divided the prayer said in the Opening Chapter into two halves between Me and My servant. My servant will have what he asks for.' When the servant says: 'Praise and glory belong to God, the Lord of the Creation,' Allah says: 'My servant has praised Me.' When he says: 'The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,' Allah says: 'My servant has extolled Me.' When he says: 'The Master of the Day of Recompense,' Allah says: 'My servant has glorified Me.' When he says: 'You alone we worship and from You alone we seek help,' Allah says: 'This is between Me and My servant, and My servant will have what he asks for.' When he says: 'Guide us to the straight path. The path of those You blessed, those who incur no anger and who have not gone astray,' Allah says: 'This is for My servant, and My servant will have what he asks for.'" This narration beautifully illustrates the profound relationship between the servant and Allah during the recitation of the opening chapter.

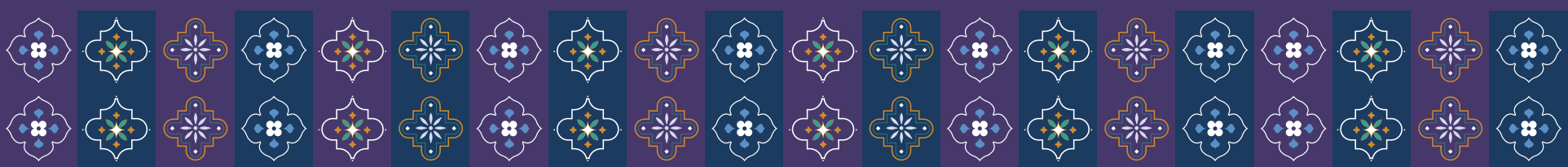




# Key Themes of the Opening Chapter

- 1 Praise and Gratitude.
- 2 Acknowledging the Grace and Mercy of Allah.
- 3 Acknowledging the Sovereignty of Allah over the Day of Recompense.
- 4 Declaring the Exclusive Worship of and Reliance on Allah alone.
- 5 Seeking Allah's Guidance and Steadfastness on Guidance.
- 6 Distinguishing the Path of the blessed from others.

These themes collectively encapsulate the essence of the Quran and serve as a constant reminder to us.

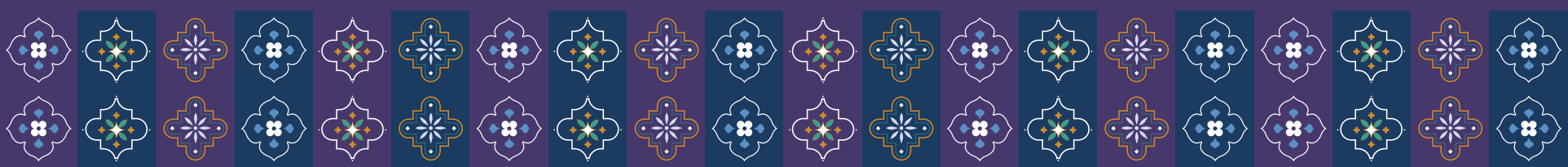




## Explanation of Each Passage

### Passage 1 – “I Begin With the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”

Passage One begins by invoking God’s name. This phrase is the Prayer of Beginnings which is said when beginning anything, especially when it is good or blessed. There is nothing more blessed than the Quran, the speech of God. In doing so, we are seeking God’s help, protection and blessings, as we start the recitation. We are also invoking God’s grace, compassion and mercy. This Passage teaches us to invoke God’s name when beginning any activity.



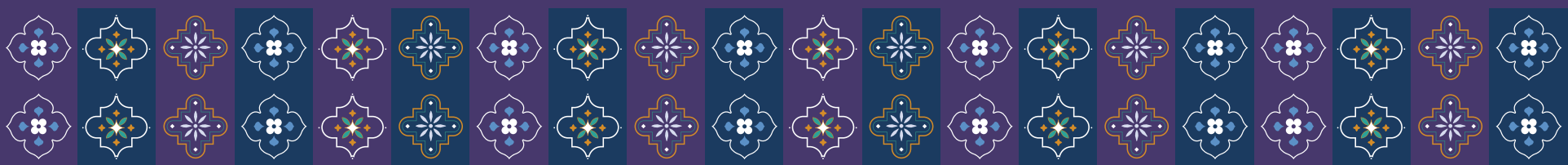


## Explanation of Each Passage

**Passage 2 – “Praise and Glory belong exclusively to God, the Lord of the Creation.”**

Praising God denotes love, submission and humility. It is not to only compliment God as you would someone else, but to acknowledge God’s countless blessings upon you, knowing that He alone grants blessings and withholds them. God deserves praise and glory because of who He is, irrespective of the blessings in our lives. We submit to God’s greatness and majesty with humility and love, praising God using these opening words in this Passage.

We further acknowledge that Allah is the Lord of all, meaning Allah is the Lord, King and Master of everything. He is the creator of all and nothing is equal to Him or similar to Him in any way. Thus, everything besides Allah is His creation. He has no equal, partner, helper or child. We praise God acknowledging this fact and submitting to it. This Passage teaches us to constantly praise God, glorify Him and thank him in all situations.





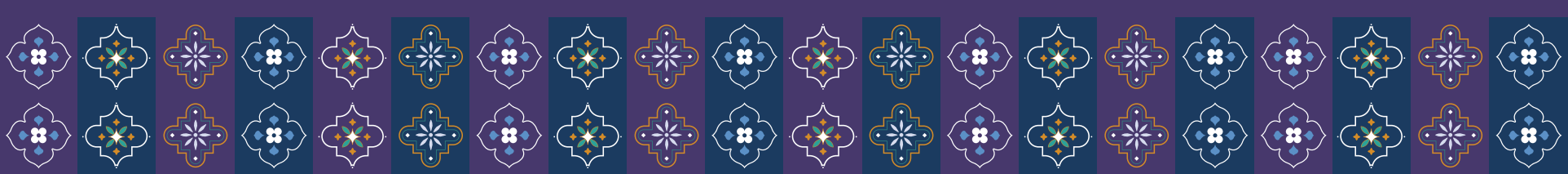


## Explanation of Each Passage

### Passage 3 – “The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”

These are two of God’s names, which denote attributes of God that revolve around grace and mercy. God is Gracious and Merciful, and His grace and mercy is shown through the many blessings He has bestowed upon His creation. This includes physical and materialistic blessings; things that will benefit from food, shelter, rain, health and everything else. This form of grace is given to all of God’s creation, human and otherwise, believers and non-believers.

This is then seen in specific forms of grace that God gives to the believers in terms of faith and the ability to perform good deeds and the reward that comes with it. God then gives this reward further for the believers specifically in the next life in the form of grace, forgiveness and the ultimate reward of Paradise. This passage reminds us to remember these attributes of God, invoke Him through them, and to have hope in them.

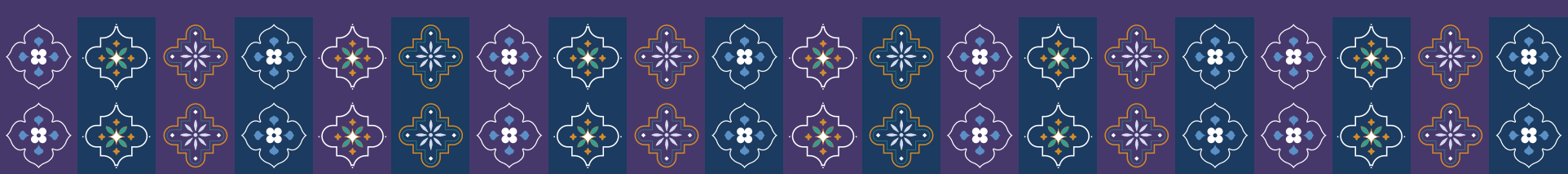




# Explanation of Each Passage

## Passage 4 – “The Master of the Day of Recompense”

God alone will be the king, master and owner of the Day of Judgement. None other than Him can rule, judge or allow intercession on that day. There will be no reward or forgiveness except from Him. Thus, this passage reminds us to remember that day and prepare for it through faith and good, righteous actions.

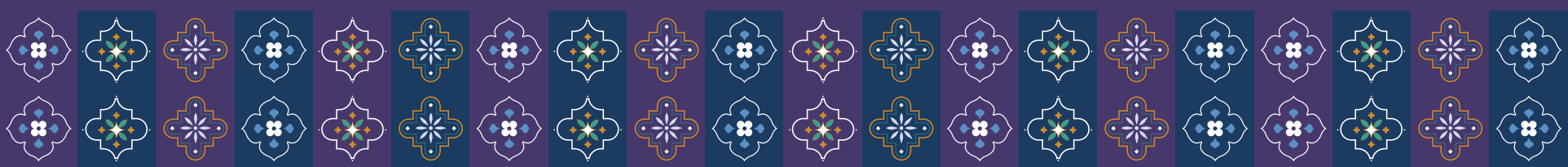




## Explanation of Each Passage

Passage 5 – “You alone we worship and from You alone we seek help.”

This is the declaration of worshipping God alone. The passage is formulated in such a way as to emphasize the importance of worshipping God alone and directing all forms of worship to Him alone, such as prayer and supplication in which we see God’s help. Worship includes all manners of submission that should only be directed to God alone. This passage reminds us as to the purpose of our creation and the importance of worshipping God alone.

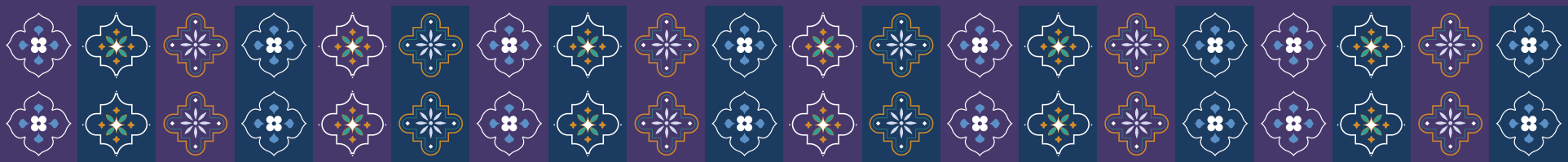




# Explanation of Each Passage

## Passage 6 – “Guide us to the Straight Path.”

The Straight Path is the path that leads to God. It is the path of faith and righteous actions. It is the path that is outlined in the Quran and through the words and guidance of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. This passage shows us that God did not just command us to worship Him, but informed us as to how to do so through revelation in the Quran and the practical example found in the life of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ.





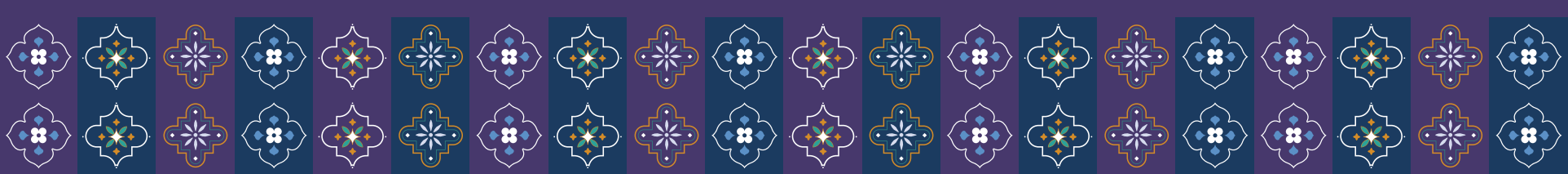


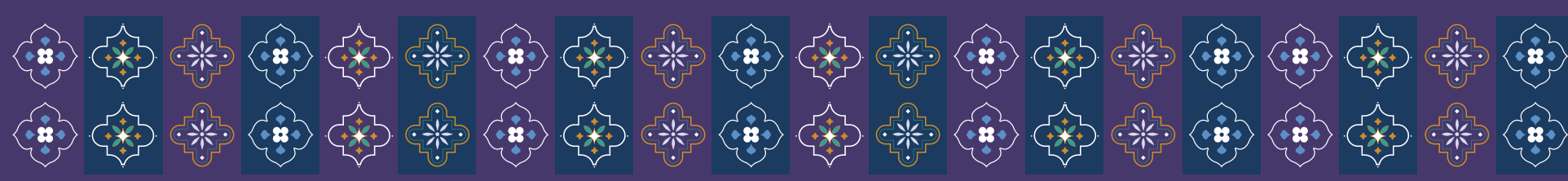
## Explanation of Each Passage

Passage 7 – “The path of those You blessed, those who incur no anger and who have not gone astray.”

The path of the blessed is that of those who follow the guidance of the Quran and Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. Those who incur anger are those who oppose, even though they should know better. Those astray are those who worship God with wishful thinking and act without knowledge. This Passage reminds us of the importance of both knowledge and action.

These seven passages encapsulate Islam and its teachings by focusing on the main issues and point in a summarized way, which is a daily reminder to the Muslims of what they need to remember and focus on.





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