Some of the different names for Surah al-Fatihah are as follows:

1. *al-Salaah* (The Connection)
2. *al-Hamd* (The Praise)
3. *Fatihatul Kitaab* (The Opening of the Book)
4. *Ummul Kitaab* (The Mother of the Book)
5. *Ummul Qur’an* (The Mother of the Qur’an)
6. *al-Mathaanee* (The Oft-Repeated)
8. *al-Shifaa’* (The Healing)
9. *al-Ruqyah* (The Cure)
10. *al-Asaas* (The Foundation)
11. *al-Waafiyah* (The Complete)
12. *al-Kaafiyah* (The Sufficient)

**The Ta’awwudh**

The *ta’awwudh* refers to the phrase:

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

“I seek protection in Allah from Shaytan the rejected one.”

The ‘ulama are agreed that it is not part of the Qur’an. But Allah (swt) has commanded us to recite it before reciting the Qur’an. He (swt) says:

 فإذا قرأت القرآن فاستعد بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

*Whenever you recite the Qur’an, seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Shaytan.*

(al-Nahl: 98)
The first ayah of the Fatihah is:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

(al-Fatihah: 1)

This phrase is known as the basmalah. It is good to recite it before doing any action.

The Basmalah in the Qur’an

The ‘ulama differ as to how many times the basmalah appears in the Qur’an. They are all agreed that it appears in Surah Naml (ayah 30), but beyond that they differ. The following are the different views:

1) It's not an ayah of the Fatihah, nor of the other Surahs. Therefore it only appears once in Surah Naml. This was the view of Imam Malik.

2) It's an ayah of all the Surahs. Therefore it appears 114 times: once in each Surah except for Surah Tawbah but twice in Surah Naml. This was the view of Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak and one of the views of Imam al-Shafi’i.

3) It's an ayah of Surah Fatihah but not of the other Surahs. Therefore it appears twice: in Surah Fatihah and in Surah Naml. This was one of the views of Imam al-Shafi'i.

And all the views have their evidences.

The Meaning of the letter Baa

The Baa in the Arabic language can have three different meanings:

1) With - With / In the name of Allah
2) Seeking help - Seeking help of the name of Allah
3) Seeking blessing - Seeking blessing with the name of Allah
The Meaning of Allah

The following are some of the different opinions of the ‘ulama concerning the meaning and derivation of “Allah”:

1) There is no meaning, just a Proper Name.
2) From aliha meaning to astonish and amazes, so Allah is the One who Astonishes the creation by His attributes, His creation, His Planning and His Rulings.
3) Allah is from alaha, so Allah is Ma’looh, One who is Worshipped.
4) Fourth opinion is from wilaah, so Allah means the One whom everyone turns to for help.

The Meaning of al-Rahman and al-Raheem

Both of these names are derived from the same root letters: raa, haa, meem; which means to have mercy. They are thus similar in meaning and both are connected to Allah’s (swt) Mercy. The fact that Allah (swt) mentions two of His Names which have to do with Mercy, rather than Might and Power or so on, shows just how important this Attribute is.

The difference between al-Rahman and al-Raheem is that al-Rahman refers to Allah’s (swt) Mercy to all of creation. It is His Mercy which is extended to both believers and disbelievers; animals, and everything that exists. He says in the Qur’an:

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسَعَتُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ

My Mercy encompasses all things.
(al-A’raf: 156)

al-Rahman follows the form of fa’laan. It therefore indicates the extreme vastness of Allah’s (swt) Mercy. It is mentioned in a hadith that Allah (swt) divided Mercy into 100 parts and sent down only one part to this dunya. It is from this one part of His Mercy that animals show mercy to their offspring (Sahih Muslim).

al-Raheem refers to Allah’s (swt) Mercy which is specific for the believers. He says in the Qur’an:

وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَحِيمًا

And He is Full of Mercy to the Believers.
(al-Alhzab: 43)

al-Raheem follows the form of fa’eel. It therefore indicates the doing of an action.
All Praise is due to Allah…

The second ayah is:

الحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.

(al-Fatihah: 2)

The Meaning of Hamd and the Difference between Hamd and Shukr

Hamd means praise and also thankfulness. The ‘ulama differed as to the relation between the words hamd and shukr. Some said that they both have the same meaning. So the meaning of hamd, in their view, is the same as shukr (thankfulness, gratitude).

Others said that shukr is is more general than hamd. In that shukr is done with the tongue, the limbs and the heart; whereas hamd is done with the tongue only.

It is also said that hamd is more general than shukr. In that it contains the meaning of shukr (thankfulness) as well as madh (praise). Therefore it is more general because hamd takes the place of shukr but shukr doesn’t take the place of hamd.

Hamd is something which must be done with love and reverence, but shukr does not need this. Shukr is done in response to a favour which is done to a person but hamd is done simply because the one being praised and thanked is worthy of that.

The Virtue of Alhamdulillah

The Prophet ﷺ said, “There is no favour [ni‘mah] which Allah bestows upon a slave who then says 'Alhamdulillah', except that what he gives is better than what he receives” [i.e. his praising is Allah is better than the favour Allah gave him] (Sunan ibn Majah).

He ﷺ also said that one person praised Allah (swt) by saying, “Yaa rabbi lakal hamdu kamaa yambaghee li jalaali wajhika wa ‘azeemi suultaanik – O my Lord, to You is praise befitting the Glory of Your Countenance and the Greatness of Your Dominion.” This praise was so great that the angels did not know how to record it. They thus referred it to Allah (swt) who told them to write it as he had said it, and that He (swt) would (personally) reward that person when he would meet Allah (swt) (Sunan ibn Majah).
The Meaning of Rabb

Rabb is usually translated as Lord but it is much more encompassing than that. It also includes the meaning of Nurturer, Sustainer, Cherisher and so on. The Rabb is the creator, king, master and the one who controls everything. It comes from the root letters raa, baa, baa: which means to have mastery and control over something. Some ‘ulama said that this is the Greatest Name of Allah [Ism Allah al-A'zam], because of its abundant usage by those who make dua.

The Meaning of ‘Aalameen

Some of the differing views about it are that it refers to:

- everything which exists other than Allah ta’alaa
- mankind and the jinn
- those things which have an intellect, and they are four: mankind, jinn, angels, and devils [shayateen]
- those things which have souls

The best view is the first one, the dalil being ayah 23 of Surah Shu'ara.

The Beneficent, The Most Merciful…

The third ayah is:

الرَّحْمَنَ الرَّحِيمَ

The Beneficent, The Most Merciful.

(al-Fatihah: 3)

The explanation of these two names has already been given. Why then is it repeated? This is to once again emphasise the importance of the quality of mercy. Also, when something is repeated in the Qur’an, then you should look at the ayat before it and after it, to see how they are related. In this case, the previous ayah mentioned that Allah (swt) is the Rabb of all the worlds. So His repeating the words, al-Rahman al-Raheem after that, shows to us that His being the Rabb - His taking of and sustaining and providing for us - is all part of His Mercy towards us.
**Master of the Day of Reward…**

The fourth ayah is:

\[ مَالِكُ يَوْمَ الْدِّينِ \]

**Master of the Day of Reward.**

(al-Fatihah: 3)

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**The Meaning of Maalik**

The first word of this ayah can be recited in two ways: either as “Maalik” (with a *madd* after the meem) or as “Malik” (without the *madd*). Maalik means master, and it refers to “milk” - the ownership of something. Malik means king, and it refers to “mulk” - the dominion of a person.

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**The Meaning of Yawm al-Deen**

Yawm al-Deen is the day of reward and of recompense. It is the day when every person will be paid back for what he did in this world, and his deeds will be reckoned. Those who believed and did good will be rewarded with Jannah and those who disbelieved and did evil will be punished in Jahannam. Allah (swt) explains and says:

\[ يَوْمَ يُقَدِّرُ نَفْسَهُمْ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمْ الْحَقَّ \]

On that Day Allah will pay them in full what is due to them.

(al-Nur: 25)

And also:

\[ الْيَوْمَ نَجْرَوْنَ ما كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ \]

Today you will be repaid for what you did.

(al-Jathiyah: 28)
You (Alone) We Worship…

The fifth ayah is:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

You (alone) we worship and You (alone) we ask for help.

(al-Fatihah: 5)

At this point the there is a shift in the Surah from informing us about Allah (swt) and praising Him, to addressing Him.

"We worship" means we obey. Worship is obedience and self-abasement. It means to humble yourself before Allah (swt) and to submit to His Will. Outwardly it is abasement, but in reality it is glory and beautification. The ayah affirms the Lordship of Allah and affirms that worship is due to Him, since other people worship others besides Him, such as idols and so on.

"Iyyaaka nasta'een" means we seek help, support and success.

Usually, in most sentences the verb comes first and then the object; but in this ayah the object of the verb is mentioned first and then the verb. So why is this? It is in order to attach importance to it, to Allah (swt). It is also so that the mention of the slave and of worship would not come before the mention of Allah (swt).
Guide us on the Straight Path...

The sixth ayah is:

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ المُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us on the Straight Path.

(al-Fatihah: 5)

This ayah is a dua which we make to Allah (swt). We ask Him to show us the Straight Path and to guide us on it, so that we will get His Guidance which draws us closer and nearer to Him. It could also mean that we ask Him to guide us to do all the Sunnah acts when doing our Fard duties. And another possible meaning of it is, “Make our hearts lean towards the truth.”

What is a path? It is a road, it's something which is traveled on, to take you from one point to another. So it's not enough just to be on the path and then be stationary, we need to travel this path. We need to travel to Allah (swt) by doing those good deeds which will draw us closer to Him, and by staying away from all evil deeds which will distance us from Him.

The Meaning of Sirat

Sirat is a road or a path. But there are certain conditions which it has to fulfil in order to be a sirat otherwise it would called something else such as tareeq or sabeel which also mean a road. The conditions are that it must be straight. It must reach the goal and it must be the shortest route to get there. It must also be wide and spacious enough for everyone who wants to travel it.

The Meaning of Mustaqeem

Mustaqeem is derived from istaqaama, which means to be straight, upright, correct. We already said that for a road to be a sirat it must be straight, so this adjective of mustaqeem again emphasis the straightness of this Path. Another meaning of mustaqeem is to remain firm or to stand firm without tilting. For example, a tree that is firmly grounded when the wind blows it is not affected by it. So the Straight Path is a path on which people are firmly grounded.
The Path of Those…

The seventh and final ayah is:

صِرْطَ الَّذِينَ أَعْمَلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرَ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الْضَّالِّينَ

The path of those you have blessed, not of those with anger on them, nor of those who are astray.

(al-Fatihah: 7)

Who are the people who have been blessed by Allah (swt) and whose Path we ask to guided to? This is explained by Allah (swt) in another ayah where He says:

وَمَنْ يُطِعُ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَعْمَلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصَّدِيقِينَ وَالشَّهِيدَاءَ وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسْنَ أَوْلَٰدَ رَقِيقًا

Whosoever obeys Allah, and the Messenger, they are with those whom Allah has favored, the Prophets, the sincere, the martyrs and the righteous, and these are the best company.

(al-Nisa’: 69)

So the favoured and blessed people are the Prophets, the sincere, the martyrs and the pious.

And who are the people with anger on them and those who are astray? This is explained by the Prophet  ﷺ. ‘Adi ibn Hatim (ra) asked him about those with anger on them and he replied that it refers to the Jews. He then asked him about those who are astray and he replied that it refers to the Christians. This is reported by al-Tirmidhi and is authentic.