

Sūrah 36: Yā Seen

Period of Revelation

A study of the style shows that it was either sent down during the last stage of the middle Makkan period or it is one of those Sūrahs which were sent down during the last stage of the Prophet's stay at Makkah.

Subject Matter and Theme

The object of the discourse is to warn the Quraysh of the consequences of not believing in the Prophethood of Muhammad and of resisting and opposing it with tyranny, ridicule and mockery. The aspect of the warning is dominant and conspicuous although along with repeatedly giving the warnings, arguments also have been given for the correct understanding by the people.

Arguments have been given for three things:

(1) For Tawhid (Oneness of God) from the signs of the universe and from common sense; (2) for the Hereafter from the signs of the universe, from common sense and from man's own existence itself; and (3) for the Prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad. This was from the fact that he was facing all kinds of hardships in the preaching of his message without any selfish motive and from this that whatever he was inviting the people to was rational and reasonable, accepting which was in the people's own interest.

On the strength of these arguments themes of reprobation, reproof and warning have been presented repeatedly in a highly forceful manner so that hearts are shaken up and those which have any capacity for accepting the truth left in them should not remain unmoved.

Imām Ahmad has related on the authority of Ma'qil bin Yasar that the Prophet said: "*Sūrah Yā Seen is the heart of the Qur'ān.*" This is similar to describing the Sūrah Al-Fātihah as the Umm al Qur'ān (the essence or core of the Qur'ān) because Al-Fātihah contains the sum and substance of the teaching of the whole Qur'ān. The Sūrah Yā Seen has been called the throbbing heart of the Qur'ān because it presents the message of the Qur'ān in a most forceful manner which breaks the inertness and stirs the spirit of man to action. The object is not only to revive and refresh the whole Islāmic creed in the mind of the dying person but also bring before him in particular a complete picture of the Hereafter so that he may know what stages he would have to pass through after crossing the stage of this worldly life.

Sūrah 36: Yā Seen¹¹⁷⁵

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful

1. Yā, Seen.¹¹⁷⁶
2. By the wise¹¹⁷⁷ Qurʾān.
3. Indeed you, [O Muhammad], are from among the messengers,
4. On a straight path.
5. [This is] a revelation of the Exalted in Might, the Merciful,
6. That you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, so they are unaware.
7. Already the word [i.e., decree] has come into effect upon most of them, so they do not believe.
8. Indeed, We have put shackles on their necks, and they are to their chins, so they are with heads [kept] aloft.
9. And We have put before them a barrier and behind them a barrier and covered them, so they do not see.
10. And it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them - they will not believe.
11. You can only warn one who follows the message and fears the Most Merciful unseen. So give him good tidings of forgiveness and noble reward.
12. Indeed, it is We who bring the dead to life and record what they have put forth and what they left behind, and all things We have enumerated in a clear register.
13. And present to them an example: the people of the city, when the messengers came to it -
14. When We sent to them two but they denied them, so We strengthened them with a third, and they said, "Indeed, we are messengers to you."
15. They said, "You are not but human beings like us, and the Most Merciful has not revealed a thing. You are only telling lies."
16. They said, "Our Lord knows that we are messengers to you,
17. And we are not responsible except for clear notification."
18. They said, "Indeed, we consider you a bad omen. If you do not desist, we will surely stone you, and there will surely touch you, from us, a painful punishment."
19. They said, "Your omen [i.e., fate] is with yourselves. Is it¹¹⁷⁸ because you were reminded? Rather, you are a transgressing people."
20. And there came from the farthest end of the city a man, running. He said, "O my people, follow the messengers.
21. Follow those who do not ask of you [any] payment, and they are [rightly] guided.

¹¹⁷⁵ *Yā Seen*: (the letters) *yā* and *seen*.

¹¹⁷⁶ See footnote to 2:1.

¹¹⁷⁷ See footnote to 10:1.

¹¹⁷⁸ Your threat against us.

22. And why should I not worship He who created me and to whom you will be returned?
23. Should I take other than Him [false] deities [while], if the Most Merciful intends for me some adversity, their intercession will not avail me at all, nor can they save me?
24. Indeed, I would then be in manifest error.
25. Indeed, I have believed in your Lord, so listen to me.”
26. It was said, “Enter Paradise.”¹¹⁷⁹ He said, “I wish my people could know
27. Of how my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honoured.”
28. And We did not send down upon his people after him any soldiers from the heaven, nor would We have done so.
29. It was not but one shout,¹¹⁸⁰ and immediately they were extinguished.
30. How regretful for the servants. There did not come to them any messenger except that they used to ridicule him.
31. Have they not considered how many generations We destroyed before them - that they to them¹¹⁸¹ will not return?
32. And indeed, all of them will yet be brought present before Us.
33. And a sign for them is the dead earth. We have brought it to life and brought forth from it grain, and from it they eat.
34. And We placed therein gardens of palm trees and grapevines and caused to burst forth therefrom some springs -
35. That they may eat of His fruit.¹¹⁸² And their hands have not produced it,¹¹⁸³ so will they not be grateful?
36. Exalted is He who created all pairs¹¹⁸⁴ - from what the earth grows and from themselves and from that which they do not know.
37. And a sign for them is the night. We remove¹¹⁸⁵ from it the [light of] day, so they are [left] in darkness.
38. And the sun runs [on course] toward its stopping point. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.
39. And the moon - We have determined for it phases, until it returns [appearing] like the old date stalk.
40. It is not allowable [i.e., possible] for the sun to reach the moon, nor does the night overtake the day, but each, in an orbit, is swimming.
41. And a sign for them is that We carried their forefathers¹¹⁸⁶ in a laden ship.

¹¹⁷⁹ An abrupt transfer to the Hereafter conveys the meaning that the man met a violent death at the hands of the disbelievers and so was martyred for the cause of God.

¹¹⁸⁰ From Gabriel or a blast from the sky.

¹¹⁸¹ i.e., to those living presently in the world.

¹¹⁸² i.e., that which God has produced for them.

¹¹⁸³ An alternative meaning is “And [eat from] what their hands have produced [i.e., planted and harvested].” Both are grammatically correct.

¹¹⁸⁴ Or “all species.”

¹¹⁸⁵ Literally, “strip” or “peel.” Sunlight projected onto the earth is removed from it as the earth turns and night approaches.

¹¹⁸⁶ Usually meaning “descendants” or “offspring” the word “*dhurriyyah*” is used here to

42. And We created for them from the likes of it that which they ride.
43. And if We should will, We could drown them; then no one responding to a cry would there be for them, nor would they be saved
44. Except as a mercy from Us and provision for a time.
45. But when it is said to them, "Beware of what is before you and what is behind you;¹¹⁸⁷ perhaps you will receive mercy..."¹¹⁸⁸
46. And no sign comes to them from the signs of their Lord except that they are from it turning away.
47. And when it is said to them, "Spend from that which God has provided for you," those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Should we feed one whom, if God had willed, He would have fed? You are not but in clear error."
48. And they say, "When is this promise, if you should be truthful?"
49. They do not await except one blast¹¹⁸⁹ which will seize them while they are disputing.
50. And they will not be able [to give] any instruction, nor to their people can they return.
51. And the Horn will be blown;¹¹⁹⁰ and at once from the graves to their Lord they will hasten.
52. They will say, "O woe to us! Who has raised us up from our sleeping place?" [The reply will be], "This is what the Most Merciful had promised, and the messengers told the truth."
53. It will not be but one blast, and at once they are all brought present before Us.
54. So today [i.e., the Day of Judgement] no soul will be wronged at all, and you will not be recompensed except for what you used to do.
55. Indeed the companions of Paradise, that Day, will be amused in [joyful] occupation -
56. They and their spouses - in shade, reclining on adorned couches.
57. For them therein is fruit, and for them is whatever they request [or wish]
58. [And] "Peace," a word from a Merciful Lord.
59. [Then He will say], "But stand apart today, you criminals."¹¹⁹¹
60. Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam, that you not worship Satan - [for] indeed, he is to you a clear enemy -

denote forefathers (their being the offspring of Noah), who were saved from the flood.

¹¹⁸⁷ Of sins or of life in this world and the Hereafter.

¹¹⁸⁸ The conclusion of this sentence is understood to be "...they ignored the warning."

¹¹⁸⁹ Literally, "cry" or "shriek," meaning the first blast of the Horn which will strike dead every living thing on the earth without warning.

61. And that you worship [only] Me? This is a straight path.

¹¹⁹⁰ For the second time, signalling the Resurrection.

¹¹⁹¹ i.e., remove yourself from the ranks of the believers to be distinguished from them.

62. And he had already led astray from among you much of creation, so did you not use reason?
63. This is the Hellfire which you were promised.
64. [Enter to] burn therein today for what you used to deny.¹¹⁹²
65. That Day, We will seal over their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will testify about what they used to earn.
66. And if We willed, We could have obliterated their eyes, and they would race to [find] the path, and how could they see?¹¹⁹³
67. And if We willed, We could have deformed them, [paralyzing them] in their places so they would not be able to proceed, nor could they return.¹¹⁹⁴
68. And he to whom We grant long life We reverse in creation;¹¹⁹⁵ so will they not understand?
69. And We did not give him [i.e., Prophet Muhammad] knowledge of poetry, nor is it befitting for him. It is not but a message and a clear Qurʾān
70. To warn whoever is alive¹¹⁹⁶ and justify the word [i.e., decree] against the disbelievers.
71. Do they not see that We have created for them from what Our hands¹¹⁹⁷ have made, grazing livestock, and [then] they are their owners?
72. And We have tamed them for them, so some of them they ride, and some of them they eat.
73. And for them therein are [other] benefits and drinks, so will they not be grateful?
74. But they have taken besides God [false] deities that perhaps they would be helped.
75. They are not able to help them, and they [themselves] are for them soldiers in attendance.¹¹⁹⁸
76. So let not their speech grieve you. Indeed, We know what they conceal and what they declare.
77. Does man not consider that We created him from a [mere] sperm drop - then at once¹¹⁹⁹ he is a clear adversary?
78. And he presents for Us an example¹²⁰⁰ and forgets his [own] creation. He says, "Who will give life to bones while they are disintegrated?"
79. Say, "He will give them life who produced them the first time; and He is, of all creation, Knowing."
80. [It is] He who made for you from the green tree, fire, and then from it you ignite.

¹¹⁹² Or "because you used to disbelieve."

¹¹⁹³ God could have left man without means of guidance in the life of this world, although in His mercy He did not.

¹¹⁹⁴ He (Almighty) could have prevented man from taking any action to benefit himself in this world or the Hereafter, yet He did not.

¹¹⁹⁵ In his physical and mental capacity.

¹¹⁹⁶ In heart and mind, i.e., the believers.

¹¹⁹⁷ See footnote to 2:19.

¹¹⁹⁸ Maintaining and protecting their "gods." Another interpretation is that they (i.e., the gods) will be soldiers set against them in Hellfire.

¹¹⁹⁹ i.e., as soon as he becomes self-sufficient.

¹²⁰⁰ Attempting to establish the finality of death.

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81. Is not He who created the heavens and the earth Able to create the likes of them? Yes, [it is so]; and He is the Knowing Creator.
 82. His command is only when He intends a thing that He says to it, “Be,” and it is.
 83. So exalted is He in whose hand is the realm of all things, and to Him you will be returned.