
Sūrah 40: Ghāfir

Period of Revelation

According to Ibn Abbas, this Sūrah was sent down consecutively after Sūrah az-Zumar and its present position in the order of the Sūrahs in the Qurʾān is the same as its chronological order.

Background of Revelation

There are clear indications in the subject matter of this Sūrah to the conditions in which it was revealed. The disbelievers of Makkah at that time were engaged in two kinds of the activities against the Prophet. First, they were creating every kind of suspicion and misgiving in the minds of the people about the teaching of the Qurʾān and the message of Islām and about the Prophet himself by starting many disputes and discussions, raising irrelevant objections and bringing ever new accusations so that the Prophet and the believers were sick of trying to answer them. Second, they were preparing the ground for putting an end to the Prophet himself. They were devising one plot after the other, and on one occasion had even taken the practical steps to execute a plot. Bukhari has related a hadith on the authority of Abdullah bin Amr bin As saying that one day when the Prophet was offering his Prayer in the precincts of the Kaʿbāh, suddenly ʿUqbah bin Abi Muʿait, rushed forward and putting a piece of cloth round his neck started twisting it so as to strangle him to death. Abu Bakr, who happened to go there in time, pushed him away. Abdullah says that when Abu Bakr was struggling with the cruel man, he was saying words to the effect: “Would you kill a man only because he says: God is my Lord?”

Sūrah 40: Ghāfir¹²⁷²

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

1. Hā, Meem.¹²⁷³
2. The revelation of the Book [i.e., the Qur'ān] is from God, the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.
3. The forgiver of sin, acceptor of repentance, severe in punishment, owner of abundance. There is no deity except Him; to Him is the destination.
4. No one disputes concerning the signs of God except those who disbelieve, so be not deceived by their [uninhibited] movement throughout the land.
5. The people of Noah denied before them and the [disbelieving] factions after them, and every nation intended [a plot] for their messenger to seize him, and they disputed by [using] falsehood to [attempt to] invalidate thereby the truth. So I seized them, and how [terrible] was My penalty.
6. And thus has the word [i.e., decree] of your Lord come into effect upon those who disbelieved that they are companions of the Fire.
7. Those [angels] who carry the Throne and those around it exalt [God] with praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness for those who have believed, [saying], "Our Lord, You have encompassed all things in mercy and knowledge, so forgive those who have repented and followed Your way and protect them from the punishment of Hellfire."
8. Our Lord, and admit them to gardens of perpetual residence which You have promised them and whoever was righteous among their fathers, their spouses and their offspring. Indeed, it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.
9. And protect them from the evil consequences [of their deeds]. And he whom You protect from evil consequences that Day - You will have given him mercy. And that is the great attainment."
10. Indeed, those who disbelieve will be addressed, "The hatred of God for you was [even] greater than your hatred of yourselves [this Day in Hell] when you were invited to faith, but you disbelieved [i.e., refused]."
11. They will say, "Our Lord, You made us lifeless twice and gave us life twice, and we have confessed our sins. So is there to an exit any way?"
12. [They will be told], "That is because, when God was called upon alone, you disbelieved; but if others were associated with Him, you believed. So the judgement is with God, the Most High, the Grand."
13. It is He who shows you His signs and sends down to you from the sky, provision. But none will remember except he who turns back [in repentance].
14. So invoke God, [being] sincere to Him in religion, although the disbelievers dislike it.
15. [He is] the Exalted above [all] degrees, Owner of the Throne; He places the

¹²⁷² *Ghāfir*: The Forgiver, i.e., God. This *sūrah* is also known as *al-Mu'min* (The Believer).

¹²⁷³ See footnote to 2:1.

- inspiration of His command [i.e., revelation] upon whom He wills of His servants to warn of the Day of Meeting.
16. The Day they come forth nothing concerning them will be concealed from God. To whom belongs [all] sovereignty this Day? To God, the One, the Prevailing.
 17. This Day every soul will be recompensed for what it earned. No injustice today! Indeed, God is swift in account.
 18. And warn them, [O Muhammad], of the Approaching Day, when hearts are at the throats, filled [with distress]. For the wrongdoers there will be no devoted friend and no intercessor [who is] obeyed.
 19. He knows that which deceives the eyes and what the breasts conceal.
 20. And God judges with truth, while those they invoke besides Him judge not with anything. Indeed, God - He is the Hearing, the Seeing.
 21. Have they not traveled through the land and observed how was the end of those who were before them? They were greater than them in strength and in impression on the land, but God seized them for their sins. And they had not from God any protector.
 22. That was because their messengers were coming to them with clear proofs, but they disbelieved, so God seized them. Indeed, He is Powerful and severe in punishment.
 23. And We did certainly send Moses with Our signs and a clear authority
 24. To Pharaoh, Hāmān and Qārūn, but they said, "[He is] a magician and a liar."
 25. And when he brought them the truth from Us, they said, "Kill the sons of those who have believed with him and keep their women alive." But the plan of the disbelievers is not except in error.
 26. And Pharaoh said, "Let me kill Moses and let him call upon his Lord. Indeed, I fear that he will change your religion or that he will cause corruption¹²⁷⁴ in the land."
 27. But Moses said, "Indeed, I have sought refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Account."
 28. And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh who concealed his faith said, "Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, 'My Lord is God' while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? And if he should be lying, then upon him is [the consequence of] his lie; but if he should be truthful, there will strike you some of what he promises you. Indeed, God does not guide one who is a transgressor and a liar.
 29. O my people, sovereignty is yours today, [your being] dominant in the land. But who would protect us from the punishment of God if it came to us?" Pharaoh said, "I do not show you except what I see, and I do not guide you except to the way of right conduct."

¹²⁷⁴ i.e., dissension or civil strife.

30. And he who believed said, "O my people, indeed I fear for you [a fate] like the day of the companies¹²⁷⁵ -
31. Like the custom of the people of Noah and of 'Aad and Thamūd and those after them. And God wants no injustice for [His] servants.
32. And O my people, indeed I fear for you the Day of Calling¹²⁷⁶ -
33. The Day you will turn your backs fleeing; there is not for you from God any protector. And whoever God leaves astray - there is not for him any guide.
34. And Joseph had already come to you before with clear proofs, but you remained in doubt of that which he brought to you, until when he died, you said, 'Never will God send a messenger after him.' Thus does God leave astray he who is a transgressor and skeptic."
35. Those who dispute concerning the signs of God without an authority having come to them - great is hatred [of them] in the sight of God and in the sight of those who have believed. Thus does God seal over every heart [belonging to] an arrogant tyrant.
36. And Pharaoh said, "O Hāmān, construct for me a tower that I might reach the ways¹²⁷⁷ -
37. The ways into the heavens - so that I may look at the deity of Moses; but in deed, I think he is a liar." And thus was made attractive to Pharaoh the evil of his deed, and he was averted from the [right] way. And the plan of Pharaoh was not except in ruin.
38. And he who believed said, "O my people, follow me; I will guide you to the way of right conduct.
39. O my people, this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter - that is the home of [permanent] settlement.
40. Whoever does an evil deed will not be recompensed except by the like thereof; but whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - those will enter Paradise, being given provision therein without account.
41. And O my people, how is it that I invite you to salvation while you invite me to the Fire?
42. You invite me to disbelieve in God and associate with Him that of which I have no knowledge, and I invite you to the Exalted in Might, the Perpetual Forgiver.
43. Assuredly, that to which you invite me has no [response to a] supplication in this world or in the Hereafter; and indeed, our return is to God, and indeed, the transgressors will be companions of the Fire.
44. And you will remember what I [now] say to you, and I entrust my affair to God. Indeed, God is Seeing of [His] servants."
45. So God protected him from the evils they plotted, and the people of Pharaoh

¹²⁷⁵ i.e., the days on which God sent His punishment upon those who rejected their prophets in former times.

¹²⁷⁶ i.e., the Day of Judgement, when the criminals will cry out in terror, the people will call to each other (see 7:44-51), and the angels will call out the results of each person's judgement.

¹²⁷⁷ Means of ascent, pathways.

- were enveloped by the worst of punishment -
46. The Fire, they are exposed to it morning and evening.¹²⁷⁸ And the Day the Hour appears [it will be said], "Make the people of Pharaoh enter the severest punishment."
47. And [mention] when they will argue within the Fire, and the weak will say to those who had been arrogant, "Indeed, we were [only] your followers, so will you relieve us of a share of the Fire?"
48. Those who had been arrogant will say, "Indeed, all [of us] are in it. Indeed, God has judged between the servants."
49. And those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell, "Supplicate your Lord to lighten for us a day from the punishment."
50. They will say, "Did there not come to you your messengers with clear proofs?" They will say, "Yes." They will reply, "Then supplicate [yourselves], but the supplication of the disbelievers is not except in error [i.e., futility]."
51. Indeed, We will support Our messengers and those who believe during the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses will stand -
52. The Day their excuse will not benefit the wrongdoers, and they will have the curse, and they will have the worst home [i.e., Hell].
53. And We had certainly given Moses guidance, and We caused the Children of Israel to inherit the Scripture
54. As guidance and a reminder for those of understanding.
55. So be patient, [O Muhammad]. Indeed, the promise of God is truth. And ask forgiveness for your sin¹²⁷⁹ and exalt [God] with praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning.
56. Indeed, those who dispute concerning the signs of God without [any] authority having come to them - there is not within their breasts except pride, [the extent of] which they cannot reach. So seek refuge in God. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Seeing.
57. The creation of the heavens and earth is greater than the creation of mankind, but most of the people do not know.
58. And not equal are the blind and the seeing, nor are those who believe and do righteous deeds and the evildoer. Little do you remember.
59. Indeed, the Hour is coming - no doubt about it - but most of the people do not believe.
60. And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you." Indeed, those who disdain My worship will enter Hell [rendered] contemptible.
61. It is God who made for you the night that you may rest therein and the day giving sight.¹²⁸⁰ Indeed, God is full of

¹²⁷⁸ From the time of their death until the Day of Resurrection, when they will be driven into it.

¹²⁷⁹ What is intended is "fault" or "error" in judgement, since all prophets were protected by God from falling into sin. The implication is that all believers should seek forgiveness for their sins.

¹²⁸⁰ i.e., making things visible.

- bounty to the people, but most of the people are not grateful.
62. That is God, your Lord, Creator of all things; there is no deity except Him, so how are you deluded?
63. Thus were those [before you] deluded who were rejecting the signs of God.
64. It is God who made for you the earth a place of settlement and the sky a structure [i.e., ceiling] and formed you and perfected your forms and provided you with good things. That is God, your Lord; then blessed is God, Lord of the worlds.
65. He is the Ever-Living; there is no deity except Him, so call upon Him, [being] sincere to Him in religion. [All] praise is [due] to God, Lord of the worlds.
66. Say, [O Muhammad], "Indeed, I have been forbidden to worship those you call upon besides God once the clear proofs have come to me from my Lord, and I have been commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds."
67. It is He who created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot; then He brings you out as a child; then [He develops you] that you reach your [time of] maturity, then [further] that you become elders. And among you is he who is taken in death before [that], so that you reach a specified term;¹²⁸¹ and perhaps you will use reason.
68. He it is who gives life and causes death; and when He decrees a matter, He but says to it, "Be," and it is.
69. Do you not consider those who dispute concerning the signs of God - how are they averted?
70. Those who deny the Book [i.e., the Qur'ān] and that with which We sent Our messengers - they are going to know,
71. When the shackles are around their necks and the chains; they will be dragged
72. In boiling water; then in the Fire they will be filled [with flame].
73. Then it will be said to them, "Where is that which you used to associate [with Him in worship]
74. Other than God?" They will say, "They have departed from us; rather, we did not used to invoke previously anything." Thus does God put astray the disbelievers.
75. [The angels will say], "That was because you used to exult upon the earth without right and you used to behave insolently.
76. Enter the gates of Hell to abide eternally therein, and wretched is the residence of the arrogant."
77. So be patient, [O Muhammad]; indeed, the promise of God is truth. And whether We show you some of what We have promised them or We take you in death, it is to Us they will be returned.
78. And We have already sent messengers before you. Among them are those [whose stories] We have related to you, and among them are those [whose stories] We have not related to you. And it

¹²⁸¹ The time decreed for your death.

was not for any messenger to bring a sign [or verse] except by permission of God. So when the command of God comes, it will be concluded [i.e., judged] in truth, and the falsifiers will thereupon lose [all].

79. It is God who made for you the grazing animals upon which you ride, and some of them you eat.
80. And for you therein are [other] benefits and that you may realize upon them a need which is in your breasts;¹²⁸² and upon them and upon ships you are carried.
81. And He shows you His signs. So which of the signs of God do you deny?
82. Have they not traveled through the land and observed how was the end of those before them? They were more numerous than themselves and greater in strength and in impression on the land, but they were not availed by what they used to earn.
83. And when their messengers came to them with clear proofs, they [merely] rejoiced in what they had of knowledge, but they were enveloped by what they used to ridicule.
84. And when they saw Our punishment, they said, "We believe in God alone and disbelieve in that which we used to associate with Him."
85. But never did their faith benefit them once they saw Our punishment. [It is] the established way of God which has preceded among His servants. And the disbelievers thereupon lost [all].

¹²⁸² i.e., that you may use the animals to carry your loads to distant places, according to need.