

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Ghafir

The Forgiver

The complete journey — the believer who spoke, and the door of dua —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 40 • 85 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

*Ghaafiriz-zambi wa Qaabilit-tawbi
Shadeedil-'iqaabi Zit-tawl*

3. The Forgiver of sin, Acceptor of repentance, Severe in punishment, Owner of abundance.

*Allazeena yahmiloonal-'Arsha wa man hawlahoo
yusabbihoona bihamdi Rabbihim*

7. Those who carry the Throne and those around it glorify their Lord with praise...

*Wa qaala rajulum-mu'minum-min aali Fir'awna
yaktumu eemaanah*

28. And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh, who concealed his faith, said...

*Wa ufawwidu amreee ilal-laah; innal-laaha
baseerum-bil-'ibaad*

44. And I entrust my affair to Allah. Indeed, Allah is Seeing of His servants.

Wa qaala Rabbukumud-'ooneee astajib lakum

60. And your Lord says: Call upon Me; I will respond to you.

*Falam yaku yanfa'uhum eemaanuhum lammaa
ra-aw ba'sanaa*



85. But their faith did not benefit them once they saw
Our punishment.

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Four Names in One Ayah

Beta, this surah opens with 'Ha Meem' and then gives a description of Allah so perfectly balanced that scholars have taught the whole theology of hope and fear from it alone:

'GHAFIRIZ-ZAMBI — the FORGIVER OF SIN — WA QABILIT-TAWBI — and ACCEPTOR OF REPENTANCE — SHADEEDIL-'IQABI — SEVERE IN PUNISHMENT — ZIT-TAWL — OWNER OF ABUNDANCE — LA ILAHA ILLA HUW — there is no deity except Him — ILAYHIL-MASEER — to Him is the destination.'

Beta, look at the arrangement. TWO Names of mercy first: He forgives sin, and He accepts repentance — and note these are two separate things. 'Ghafirizzamb' covers the sin of one who may not even have formally



repented yet; 'Qabilit-tawb' is His acceptance when a servant turns back. Mercy from two directions.

Then ONE Name of severity: 'Shadeedil-'iqab'. And then immediately back to generosity: 'Zit-tawl' — Owner of vast bounty and favour.

Beta, mercy surrounds the warning on both sides. That is how a believer's heart should be built: hope and fear together, but with the warning enclosed inside mercy — never the reverse.

And then, beta, an ayah that should make you feel something every time you read it: 'ALLAZINA YAHMILOONAL-'ARSHA WA MAN HAWLAHU YUSABBIHOONA BI-HAMDI RABBIHIM WA YU'MINOONA BIHI — those who CARRY THE THRONE and those around it glorify their Lord with praise and believe in Him — WA YASTAGHFIROONA LILLAZINA AMANOO — AND THEY ASK FORGIVENESS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED.'



And their dua is recorded: 'RABBANA WASI'TA KULLA SHAY'IN RAHMATAN WA 'ILMAN — our Lord, You have ENCOMPASSED ALL THINGS in MERCY AND KNOWLEDGE — FAGHFIR LILLAZINA TABOO WATTABA'OO SABEELAKA WA QIHIM 'AZABAL-JAHEEM — so forgive those who repented and followed Your way, and protect them from the punishment of Hellfire.'

'RABBANA WA ADKHILHUM JANNATI 'ADNINIL-LATI WA'ADTAHUM WA MAN SALAHA MIN ABA'IHIM WA AZWAJIHIM WA ZURRIYYATIHIM — our Lord, and admit them to the Gardens of perpetual residence which You promised them, AND WHOEVER WAS RIGHTEOUS AMONG THEIR FATHERS, THEIR SPOUSES AND THEIR OFFSPRING.'

Beta, feel the enormity of this. The greatest angels in creation, the bearers of the Throne, are making dua for YOU — and not only for you, but for your righteous parents, your spouse and your children.



Note the phrase 'Wasi'ta kulla shay'in rahmatan wa 'ilma' — mercy is mentioned BEFORE knowledge. And note how the angels argue: they begin their request by naming Allah's mercy, then ask. Beta, learn to make dua that way — praise first, then ask.

The Believer Who Concealed His Faith

And now, beta, the surah tells the story that is its heart — the story of an unnamed man whose courage the Quran preserved forever.

Firaun had decided to kill Musa (alaihi salam):
'ZAROONEE AQTUL MOOSA WALYAD'U RABBAH —
leave me to kill Musa, and let him call upon his Lord —
INNI AKHAFU AN YUBADDILA DEENAKUM AW AN
YUZ-HIRA FIL-ARDIL-FASAD — I fear he will change
your religion or cause corruption in the land.'

Beta, notice the tyrant's language: he presents murder as protecting religion and public order. It is the oldest script in politics.



And then: 'WA QALA RAJULUN MU'MINUN MIN ALI FIR'AWNA YAKTUMU IMANAHU — and a BELIEVING MAN from the FAMILY OF FIRAUN, who CONCEALED HIS FAITH, said: A TAQTULOONA RAJULAN AN YAQOOLA RABBIYALLAHU WA QAD JA'AKUM BIL-BAYYINATI MIN RABBIKUM — WOULD YOU KILL A MAN BECAUSE HE SAYS: MY LORD IS ALLAH — while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord?'

Beta, understand who is speaking. A man inside Firaun's own court — his family, his circle of power. He had hidden his faith for years, staying alive and staying close. And on the day a life was at stake, he spoke.

And look at how skilfully he argues, beta. He does not begin by declaring Islam and inviting execution. He appeals to their own reasoning:

'WA IN YAKU KAZIBAN FA-'ALAYHI KAZIBUH — if he is a LIAR, then his lie is upon him — WA IN YAKU SADIQAN YUSIBKUM BA'DUL-LAZI YA'IDUKUM — but if he is TRUTHFUL, some of what he promises you will



strike you.'

Beta, that is a masterpiece of persuasion. He offers them a simple calculation: if he is lying, he harms only himself — so why kill him? And if he is telling the truth, then killing him invites disaster upon yourselves. Either way, the sensible choice is to let him live.

Then he reminds them of history — the people of Nuh, 'Aad, Thamud — and warns of 'YAWMAT-TANAD', the Day of Calling Out. And gradually, as the speech continues, his faith comes into the open: 'YA QAWMI ITTABI'OONI AHDIKUM SABEELAR-RASHAD — O my people, FOLLOW ME; I will guide you to the way of RIGHT CONDUCT.'

And then he says one of the most beautiful sentences in the Quran, beta: 'YA QAWMI MA LEE AD'OOKUM ILAN-NAJATI WA TAD'OONANEE ILAN-NAR — O MY PEOPLE, WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME THAT I CALL YOU TO SALVATION, AND YOU CALL ME TO THE FIRE?'



Beta, that ayah describes every believer's experience among people who wish him well but pull him wrong. You invite them to something that will save them; they invite you to something that will burn you — and both sides believe they are being kind.

'TAD'OONANEE LI-AKFURA BILLAHI WA USHRIKA BIHI MA LAYSA LEE BIHI 'ILM — you invite me to disbelieve in Allah and associate with Him that of which I have no knowledge — WA ANA AD'OOKUM ILAL-'AZEEZIL-GHAFFAR — while I invite you to the ALMIGHTY, the CONSTANTLY FORGIVING.'

I Entrust My Affair to Allah

And now, beta, his final words — and this is the sentence I want you to memorise and keep for the hardest days of your life.

He warned them once more, and then said:

'FA-SATAZKUROONA MA AQOOLU LAKUM — you will REMEMBER what I am telling you — WA UFAWWIDU AMREE ILALLAH — AND I ENTRUST MY AFFAIR TO



ALLAH — INNALLAHA BASEERUN BIL-'IBAD —
indeed, Allah is SEEING of His servants.'

Beta, 'ufawwidu amree ilallah' — I hand my whole matter over to Allah. 'Tafweed' means to delegate completely, to place a case entirely in someone else's hands and step back from it.

Think about his position when he said it. He had just openly defied the most powerful tyrant on earth, in that tyrant's own court, surrounded by his men. He had no army, no escape, no protection. And his response was not a plan — it was a handover.

And Allah's verdict on that handover, beta:
'FA-WAQAHULLAHU SAYYI'ATI MA MAKAROO — SO
ALLAH PROTECTED HIM FROM THE EVILS THEY
PLOTTED — WA HAQA BI-ALI FIR'AWNA
SOO'UL-'AZAB — and the WORST PUNISHMENT
ENVELOPED THE PEOPLE OF FIRAUN.'

Beta, one man against an empire. He said 'I entrust my affair to Allah' — and Allah protected him and



destroyed them.

Say this sentence, beta, when you have done everything you can and the outcome is beyond you: when the report is due, when the decision is with someone who dislikes you, when you have spoken the truth and now must live with the consequences. 'Wa ufawwidu amree ilallah, innallaha baseerun bil-'ibad.'

And note the name of this surah's other title: some scholars called it 'Surah al-Mu'min' — the surah of the Believer — after this man. Beta, we do not even know his name. Allah did not record it. What He recorded was his SENTENCE. Sometimes your legacy is not your name; it is one thing you said when it mattered.

Call Upon Me, I Will Respond

And now, beta, comes the ayah that is perhaps the most generous open invitation in the entire Quran:

'WA QALA RABBUKUMUD-'OONEE ASTAJIB LAKUM —
AND YOUR LORD SAYS: CALL UPON ME; I WILL



RESPOND TO YOU — INNAL-LAZINA YASTAKBIROONA
'AN 'IBADATEE SAYADKHULOONA JAHANNAMA
DAKHIREEN — indeed, those who are TOO ARROGANT
to worship Me will enter Hell in humiliation.'

Beta, take this apart.

'Ud'oonee' — CALL ME. Not 'if you like'. Not 'when it is
urgent'. It is a command in the imperative — Allah is
COMMANDING you to ask Him.

'Astajib lakum' — I WILL RESPOND. Not 'I might'. Not
'if you are worthy'. A promise, from the One who never
breaks a promise.

Beta, and notice what comes immediately after: those
who are too ARROGANT to worship Me. Which means
— asking Allah IS worship, and NOT asking Him is
described as arrogance. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Dua IS
worship' — and he warned that whoever does not ask
Allah, Allah becomes angry with him. Beta, think how
remarkable that is: with people, asking too much makes
them irritated; with Allah, NOT asking does.



And what does 'I will respond' mean, beta, when we have all asked for things we did not receive? The Prophet ﷺ explained it: no Muslim makes a dua containing no sin or severing of ties except that Allah gives him one of three things — He gives him what he asked, or He stores it for him in the Hereafter, or He turns away from him an evil equal to it. The companions said: then we will ask a lot. He said: Allah has even more.

Beta, so every single dua is answered. Not one is discarded. Some answers arrive as the thing you wanted; some as a disaster you never knew was coming toward you; and some are being saved in an account you will not open until the Day you need it most.

So ask, beta. Ask for small things and huge things. Ask in your own language. Ask while driving, while cooking, while lying awake. The invitation is open and the responder does not tire.

The Faith That Came Too Late



The surah then walks through the arguments of the deniers and Allah's replies — and includes a sobering line about pride: 'INNAL-LAZINA YUJADILOONA FEE AYATILLAHI BI-GHAYRI SULTANIN ATAHUM IN FEE SUDOORIHIM ILLA KIBRUN MA HUM BI-BALIGHEEH — those who dispute concerning the signs of Allah without any authority — there is nothing in their breasts but PRIDE, which they will NEVER ATTAIN.'

Beta, 'ma hum bi-baligheeh' — a greatness they will never reach. The proud person is chasing a status he will never actually possess. And the remedy is given in the very next words: 'FASTA'IZ BILLAH — so SEEK REFUGE IN ALLAH.' Beta, arrogance is treated as something to seek refuge FROM, like a disease.

And then a comparison that should humble anyone: 'LA-KHALQUS-SAMAWATI WAL-ARDI AKBARU MIN KHALQIN-NAS — the CREATION OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH IS GREATER THAN THE CREATION OF MANKIND — WA LAKINNA AKTHARAN-NASI LA YA'LAMOON — but most people do not know.'



Beta, look up at a night sky and then look at yourself.
And yet man walks the earth swollen with
self-importance.

And the surah reaches its final scene: the deniers, when
the punishment finally arrives, will cry out: 'AMANNA
BILLAHI WAHDAHU WA KAFARNA BIMA KUNNA BIHI
MUSHRIKEEN — WE BELIEVE IN ALLAH ALONE, and
we DISBELIEVE in what we used to associate with Him!'

Beta, at last — the perfect shahadah, exactly the words
that were being asked of them all along. And Allah's
reply: 'FA-LAM YAKU YANFA'UHUM IMANUHUM
LAMMA RA'AW BA'SANA — BUT THEIR FAITH DID
NOT BENEFIT THEM ONCE THEY SAW OUR
PUNISHMENT — SUNNATALLAHIL-LATI QAD
KHALAT FEE 'IBADIH — the ESTABLISHED WAY of
Allah which has passed among His servants — WA
KHASIRA HUNALIKAL-KAFIROON — and the
disbelievers were LOST at that point.'



Beta, this is the surah's final and heaviest lesson. Faith has a DEADLINE. It is accepted while the unseen is still unseen — that is what makes it faith. Once the punishment is visible, believing is no longer a choice; it is merely acknowledging a fact, and it earns nothing. Firaun himself tried it as the water closed over him, and it was refused.

And so, beta, the surah that began by naming Allah 'the Forgiver of sin, the Acceptor of repentance' ends by showing a door closing. Both are true at once: the door is astonishingly wide, and it does not stay open forever.

'Ud'oonee astajib lakum' — the invitation is open right now, while you are reading this. That is the whole point of the surah being placed in your hands today rather than tomorrow.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. Mercy encloses the warning on both sides — build your heart the same way: hope and fear, with hope on the outside.



2. The bearers of the Throne are making istighfar for the believers and their righteous families right now.
 3. Learn to argue as the believing man did: reasonably, patiently, and from the other person's own logic.
 4. 'What is wrong with me that I call you to salvation and you call me to the Fire?' — expect that even loving people may pull you the wrong way.
 5. When the outcome leaves your hands, say it and mean it: 'wa ufawwidu amree ilallah' — and Allah protected him from an empire.
 6. Dua IS worship, and NOT asking is called arrogance — every dua is answered in one of three ways.
 7. Faith has a deadline: it counts while the unseen is unseen. The door is wide, but it closes.
- Ya Ghafiraz-zamb, forgive us, accept our repentance, answer our duas, and let us hand our affairs over to You. Ameen.



— This is a simplified, faithful retelling for understanding, based on the Quran's translation and established tafseer (Ibn Kathir and others). For deeper study, always read with a qualified teacher. —

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