

Surat Yaasin verses 8 - 10

Learning objectives:

- To provide an understanding of verses 8-10 of Surat Yaasin
- To memorise Surat Yaasin up to verse 10

Verses 8-10:

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ أَغْلَالًا فَهِيَ إِلَى الْأَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُقْمَحُونَ

Indeed We have put iron collars (aghlaal) around their necks, which are up to the chins, so their heads are upturned.

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ سَدًّا وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَأَغْشَيْنَاهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ

And We have put a barrier before them and a barrier behind them, then We have blind-folded them, so they do not see.

وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْتَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

It is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith.

These verses provide a vivid metaphor for the situation of those who reject the signs of Allah (SWT). It is as if they have collars on their necks pushing up on their chins, forcing their heads to look upwards. They can't see the path around them nor can they see far ahead. Not only this, there is barrier that is placed in front of them and behind them, so they are able to move neither forwards, nor backwards.

Q: Why does Allah (SWT) do this? How then can it be their fault that they do not believe?

The reality of this can be understood from a very important hadith of Imam al-Sadiq (A):

"When a person commits a sin, a dark spot appears on his heart. If he repents, it is effaced, but if he continues committing it, the spot increases and grows until it engulfs the whole heart, and he can never again prosper."

The initiation of disbelief is not from Allah (SWT). It is from the human being. Through wrongdoing and sinning, we pollute our spiritual hearts, which were given to us in a pure state when we came to this world. The more darkened our hearts become, the less we are able to perceive and accept the truth, until we get to a state where our hearts are completely covered with darkness, such that not even the smallest amount of the light of guidance can now penetrate our hearts. This situation has also been described in the following verses:

كَلَّا ۖ بَلْ ۖ رَانَ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

Nay! rather, what they used to do has become like rust upon their hearts. [83:14]

صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ

Deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not come back (to the straight path). [2:18]

The example given in verses 8 and 9 of Surat Yaasin is a vivid depiction of this reality. It is also for people who have reached this point of no return that “the word has proved true” against them, as we looked at in the last lesson:

لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى أَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

Certainly the word has proved true of most of them, so they do not believe. [36:7]

It is for this reason that in verse 10 of Surat Yaasin, Allah (SWT) tells the Holy Prophet (S) not to become disheartened because of such people, for even if he persists in admonishing them, they will not believe:

وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

It is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith.

It is important to note here that it is not only people who are non-Muslims and reject the truth once it's been made clear to them that are in danger of reaching this point of no return. Rather, Shaytan can eventually lead each of us to reach this level of misguidance if we are not careful. For example, it might start off with Shaytan planting a thought in our minds about prayer – “why do we need to pray 5 times a day? I don't think there's any benefit in doing this.” Acting upon such doubts leads to veils being created in front of our hearts. These veils lead to more serious doubts arising in our minds, until eventually we end up rejecting the very existence of Allah (SWT) – “why do we believe in a God? This is all nonsense.”

Allamah Tabataba'i, the author of one of our greatest commentaries of the Qur'an, states that descriptions like those mentioned in verses 8-9 of Surat Yaasin might not simply be metaphors to explain the situation of those who reject the truth. In fact, these verses might be alluding to the actual reality of such people in the spiritual dimension of this world. Such people may look like they are living a very glamorous life in this physical world, but in the spiritual dimension of this world, they have collars raised to their chins and barriers in front them and behind them, and hence, find themselves in the worse of situations. Most of us, are not able to witness this spiritual reality around us, due to the veils on our hearts. However, once we die and these veils are lifted from our spiritual eyes, we will all be able to witness this reality, as mentioned in the following verse:

لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp. [50:22]

Those human beings with very pure hearts, like the Holy Prophet (S) and the Imams (A), were able to witness the realities of this spiritual dimension while living in this world.

HOMEWORK:

- 1) Complete the reflections you started in class today.
- 2) Memorise Surat Yaasin up to verse 10.