

# RAMADAN

## IMMERSION



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### Ayah 16-19

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ الْمُصَّدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَدِّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ وَالشُّهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٩﴾

- **Ayah 16:** Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humble at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient.
  - The word humble depicts being affected by Allah's reminder and **ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ** which means by the Quran.
  - **وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ** And that which Allah SWT has revealed of the truth. This is literally an explanation of **ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ**
  - The Companions asked for the Prophet SAW to tell Allah SWT to have a conversation with them.
  - Allah SWT sent Surah Yusuf, Surah Az-Zumar, before revealing this ayah to them.
  - Abdullah ibn Masud says this verse was revealed after four years the Companions had embraced Islam.

- The Prophet SAW said: "The first thing that will be taken away from the people will be their humility or humbleness (khushu')." (Ibn Kathir)
- There was a time when people would easily get affected by the words of Allah SWT. For example, when the Prophet SAW passed away, Abu Bakr recited:

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنِّي مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ أُنْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَضُرَّ اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ

Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all; but Allah will reward the grateful. (3:144)

- These words penetrated into the hearts of the Companions because their hearts were soft.
- We should approach our lives in this manner as we have now come to a point in which we have established that everything belongs to Allah, and we do not have anything.
- Allah SWT once again re-establishes here that He has shown so much to us, and He has done everything for us.
- Our efforts are merely a part of Allah's system and we are nothing but a manifestation of His greatness.
- We should not dwell on what He has not given us. Instead, we should take a deep dive into our lives and realize that whatever we have are the blessings of Allah SWT.
- Allah also talks about the process of the heart getting hard. Our hearts are likened to the ocean; in which a single drop of impurity will make the entire ocean impure. Hence, those who are impure will never have their hearts affected.
- In كتاب الرقاق (the book to make the heart tender), the Prophet SAW describes preventative measures to not let our hearts get hard. Among the main advice given is to not be consumed with dunya, because those who love dunya have very cold hearts.

- In his book Sayd al-Khatir, Imam Ibn Al-Jawzi explains the psychological aspect of how a person's heart becomes hard. He says, one can see, hear, or do good things, however, the effect will not last long enough.
- إِذَالِكِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ – this refers to the people who received the previous scriptures like Tawrah, Injil, and so forth.
- فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ – which shows the prolonged time given to them who were فَاسِيقُونَ, meaning rebellious or disobedient to Allah SWT.
- As soon as we start procrastinating, it will cause a downward spiral. We will start doubting ourselves and our aspirations become of the dunya and we will completely forget about Allah SWT.
- Islam gives emphasis on an act, but puts greater emphasis on the act of following-up.
- Our good deeds wipe away our bad deeds as Abu Dharr and Mu'adh bin Jabal reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

" اتق الله حيثما كنت واتبع السيئة الحسنة تمحها،  
وخالق الناس بخلق حسن "

"Fear Allah wherever you are, do good deeds after doing bad ones, the former will wipe out the latter, and behave decently towards people". (Riyad as-Salihin)

- The hearts of the people who procrastinate in tawbah will become so numb that they will not perceive their sins to be sinful.
- Al-Awza'i reported Bilal ibn Sa'd said:

لَا تَنْظُرْ إِلَى صُغْرِ الْخَطِيئَةِ وَلَكِنْ انظُرْ إِلَى مَنْ عَصَيْتَ

"Do not look at the smallness of the sin, but rather look at the One you have disobeyed." (Hilyat al-Awliya')

- Hence, Allah SWT gives us an example of what happened to the people of scriptures in the past.
- Despite getting the message from the books, the magnitude of Allah's greatness had left their hearts.

- For example, Bani Israel did not follow the commands of Allah SWT and they started altering their books.
  - This is also what is happening today. People are misinterpreting the Quran as they please. Nevertheless, Allah's words cannot be changed.
- There will come a time when sins will be perceived as virtue and vice versa, and people will forget the commands of Allah SWT.
  - Ibn Abbas said that after completing the last pilgrimage (in the 10th year of Hijrah), the Prophet SAW stood before the door of the ka'aba, keeping the latch of the door in his hand, and said to his Companions: "Should I not tell you of the signs of the Day of Resurrection?"
  - Salman al-Farsi was the nearest of all there and he replied: "Surely, O Messenger of Allah." The Prophet SAW said:
  - "Verily, amongst the Signs of the Hour is that people will neglect prayer, and will follow their own views (and desires will supersede the commandments of Allah SWT, they will follow only those rules which will appeal to them, and will leave other rules), and will incline towards their preferences, and will respect the wealthy people (forgetting the Islamic criterion of honor, i.e. piety), and will sell the religion for worldly benefits, at that time the heart and the soul of the believer will melt (from grief) as salt melts in water, because he will see the unlawful things and will not be able to change them."
  - Salman asked: "Does this really happen, oh prophet of Allah"? He replied: "Yes, I swear to him who holds on to my life."
  - "Oh Salman, verily at that time the evil will become virtue and the virtue will become evil, the embezzlers will be trusted, and the trustworthy people will be thought untrustworthy, and the liars will be vouchsafed, and the truthful one will be considered a liar."

- Salman asked: "Does this really happen, oh prophet of Allah"? He replied: "Yes, I swear to him who holds on to my life."
- "Oh Salman, this will happen when the veil of venerable will be torn apart (honors will be defiled), sins will be common, the bad will take authority over the good, lies will be plentiful, obstinacy (disputes) will be open, the number of poor will increase, and people will pride oneself because of clothing. There will be unseasonable rain, the instruments of music and gamble will be considered interesting, and will dislike amr-al-bil ma'roof (enjoining the good) and nahi-anil munkar (forbidding the evil) so much as that the true Mukmin (believer) at this time will be considered at the lowest degree of all amongst the ummah, the Quran reciter will backbite one another. Those are the people who will be called unclean and filthy in the kingdom of heavens."
- Salman asked: "Does this really happen, oh prophet of Allah"? He replied: "Yes, I swear to him who holds on to my life." (Bihar-ul-Anwar, Vol. III)
- فسق for example means when you peel a fruit and it no longer has the potential of being preserved; it would eventually get spoiled. Therefore, this can be likened to our hearts getting hard.
- If we are not affected by the words of Allah and if we find our hearts hardened by our sins, at the very least we should start making tawbah as well as making an intention to do so.
- **Ayah 17: Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its lifelessness. We have made clear to you the signs; perhaps you will understand.**
  - This verse gives hope to those whose hearts are hardened. Allah tells us, اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا "Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death."
  - Just as He can bring the earth back to life, He can also revive a heart that's dead.

- It does not matter how hard our heart is, Allah has the potential of كُنْ فَيَكُونُ (Be and, it is). No one can question Allah and He can change anything according to His will.
- قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمْ آيَاتِنَا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ - Allah explains these verses not to make us lose hope but to make us understand the process.
- He wants us to be more watchful and guard our hearts so it does not get hard.
- To soften the heart, Abu Hurairah said the Messenger of Allah SAW used to say:

"اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْأَرْبَعِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ وَمِنْ قَلْبٍ لَا يَخْشَعُ وَمِنْ نَفْسٍ لَا تَسْبَعُ وَمِنْ دُعَاءٍ لَا يُسْمَعُ ."

'Allahumma inni a'udhu bika min al-arba': min 'ilmin la yanfa'u, wa min qalbin la yakhsha'u, wa min nafsin la tashba'u, wa min du'a'in la yusma'u (O Allah, I seek refuge in You from four: From knowledge that is of no benefit, from a heart that is not humble, from a soul that is not satisfied and from a supplication that is not answered.)' (Sunan an-Nasa'i)

- **Ayah 18: Indeed, the men who practice charity and the women who practice charity and [they who] have loaned Allah a goodly loan - it will be multiplied for them, and they will have a noble reward.**
  - If we are ready to give our life and spend for the sake of Allah SWT, He will also bless us with martyrdom. Thus, we have to make our desires a shaheed as well.
  - Our reward for being from the Prophet's ummah can also elevate our status as a shuhada.
- **Ayah 19: And those who have believed in Allah and His messengers - those are [in the ranks of] the supporters of truth and the martyrs, with their Lord. For them is their reward and their light. But those who have disbelieved and denied Our verses - those are the companions of Hellfire.**
  - Apart from those who are charitable and spend in the way of Allah, He tells us those who believe in Allah and His messengers are siddiqeen (truthful) and shuhada (martyrs).

- رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ وَنُورُهُمْ - means the believers will have their nur (light) as a reward. Nur is what will help us on the Day of Judgement.
- The nur we will have is based on our actions in this world. Every single time we do a good deed, it softens and brightens the heart.
- In contrast, every time we sin, it puts a black mark on the heart. And the filth from these black marks will slowly taint the heart if we do not attend to it.
  - Hudhaifa said: I heard the Messenger of Allah SAW observing: Temptations will be presented to men's hearts as reed mat is woven stick by stick and any heart which is impregnated by them will have a black mark put into it, but any heart which rejects them will have a white mark put in it. The result is that there will become two types of hearts: one white like a white stone which will not be harmed by any turmoil or temptation, so long as the heavens and the earth endure; and the other black and dust-colored like a vessel which is upset, not recognizing what is good or rejecting what is abominable, but being impregnated with passion. (Sahih Muslim)
  - Without tawbah, the heart will remain stained. Allah SWT says:

كَلَّا بَلْ رَانَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

But no! In fact, their hearts have been stained by all 'the evil' they used to commit!  
(83:14)

- وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ - While the believers will have complete nur on the Day of Judgement, the disbelievers will be inmates of Jahannam.
- No matter how hard our hearts seem, we should not lose hope. Allah SWT has blessed this ummah with multiple opportunities for tawbah.

- He has given us places, months, days and nights in which the rewards can be multiplied and we can be guaranteed the highest status in Paradise as a shuhada.
- The Prophet SAW said, "For him who holds fast to my sunnah at the time of corruption of my ummah, is the reward of a hundred martyrs."
  - Below is a beautiful description of a shuhada in Paradise, as narrated on the authority of Masruq who said:

قَالَ أَمَا إِنَّا قَدْ سَأَلْنَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالَ " أَرْوَاهُمْ فِي جَوْفِ طَيْرٍ خُضِرَ لَهَا قَنَادِيلُ مُعَلَّقَةٌ بِالْعَرْشِ تَسْرُحُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ شَاءَتْ ثُمَّ تَأْوِي إِلَى تِلْكَ الْقَنَادِيلِ فَاطَّلَعَ إِلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِطْلَاعَةً فَقَالَ هَلْ تَشْتَهُونَ شَيْئًا قَالُوا أَيْ شَيْءٍ نَشْتَهِي وَنَحْنُ نَسْرُحُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ شِئْنَا فَفَعَلَ ذَلِكَ بِهِمْ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُتْرَكُوا مِنْ أَنْ يُسْأَلُوا قَالُوا يَا رَبِّ نُرِيدُ أَنْ تَرُدَّ أَرْوَاحَنَا فِي أَجْسَادِنَا حَتَّى نُقْتَلَ فِي سَبِيلِكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَى . فَلَمَّا رَأَى أَنْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ حَاجَةٌ تُرْكُوا " .

We asked 'Abdullah about the Qur'anic verse:" Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they are alive, finding their sustenance in the presence of their Lord.." (iii. 169). He said: We asked the meaning of the verse (from the Holy Prophet) who said: The souls, of the martyrs live in the bodies of green birds who have their nests in chandeliers hung from the throne of the Almighty. They eat the fruits of Paradise from wherever they like and then nestle in these chandeliers. Once their Lord cast a glance at them and said: Do ye want anything? They said: What more shall we desire? We eat the fruit of Paradise from wherever we like. Their Lord asked them the same question thrice. When they saw that they will continue to be asked and not left (without answering the question). they said: O Lord, we wish that Thou mayest return our souls to our bodies so that we may be slain in Thy way once again. When He (Allah) saw that they had no need, they were left (to their joy in heaven). (Sahih Muslim)

- Allah wants us to strive no matter how much or little our hearts are affected. We must know that The One who can make us affected is Allah.
- If we want our hearts to constantly be affected, we must seize opportunities; i.e.: take advantage to learn from scholars and keep equipping ourselves with knowledge.



- Three things that ensure a tender heart:
  - Have hope that Allah will revive our hearts
  - Through His signs as portrayed in this surah; it will keep us humble
  - Continuously seek knowledge; IIm, wahy etc. softens our hearts
- Preventive measures to avoid a hard heart:
  - Do not sin
  - Do not procrastinate
  - Make tawbah right away if we sin
  - Doing good deeds ensures that we are believers