

# SUMMER IMMERSION

## TAFSIR OF SURAH SAAD



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### SESSION 1

#### Introduction

- Two traditions Allah has honored us with:
  - 1. The Book of Allah
  - 2. The other is the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ)
- Tafsir is derived from ف-س-ر, which means to explain or to elaborate.
- The purpose of understanding tafsir is so that we can connect with the words of Allah directly and implement them in our life at a level that we understand them.
- The Qur'an is the message of Allah; the qalam of Allah. Without understanding it, it will lose its purpose.
- The most important relationship we have is the one with and the communication that we have with him is through His Book.
- We must be able to communicate with Allah through du'a. But the way that Allah communicates with us is through His words in the Qur'an.
- Learning tafsir is understanding Allah's message to us, the meaning of His words and how we can apply it in our life.
- The entire purpose of studying an ayah in the Qur'an is to analyze and rectify it within ourselves.
- The prerequisite of benefiting from the Qur'an is to come from a place that we need to benefit from it.
- When the Prophet (ﷺ) first receives divine revelation and he is told to read, he negates himself: مَا أَنَا "I am not". This teaches us the mindset we should cultivate when it comes to receiving Allah's revelation. We have to realize that we are nobody.

- The Qur'an is as would say it is already proven and nothing else can prove it. Hence, when we enter the realm of the book of Allah, we are simply learning everything within it.
- It is important to understand that the Qur'an has an authority that is far above everything else. It is the decider of everything in our life – and this is how we approach tafsir.

## Theme of the Surah

- The overarching theme of Surah Saad is prophets and promises; and these two topics are very relatable in our time.
- In the surah, there are different prophets discussed and there are different promises that Allah gives the prophets. Allah also speaks about how those promises were upheld by Him.
- Surah Saad is a Makki surah, and it has a total of 88 verses.
  - The general themes of Makki surahs:
    - The previous nations and their outcomes
    - The greatness of Allah and the blessings of Allah
    - The matters of the akhirah
- Themes in this surah:
  - Denouncing false belief
    - There will be many discussions about the previous nations' beliefs.
    - We have to denounce belief before we pronounce iman.
  - Stories of Prophet Dawud, Sulayman and Ayyub AS
    - A majority of the lessons and the reflections come from these stories.
  - Reward and punishment in the Hereafter
    - This denotes a common theme in Makki surahs.
  - The power of Allah
    - There are various mentions of Allah's power.
  - The story of Prophet Adam AS and Iblis
    - This is the closing of the surah.

## Ayah 1

- ص is a letter which we do not know its meaning. This is called Huruf al-Muqatta'at.
- These letters appear in the beginning of some surahs in the Qur'an. The only one that knows the meaning is Allah.
- However, there are discussions with regards to its possible meanings. For example, طه is said to be the name of the Prophet (ﷺ) by which Allah addresses him with.
- Three opinions for ص:
  - Allah's nickname for the Prophet (ﷺ) while speaking directly to him.
  - Allah is opening up a chapter with the discussion about the other false beliefs and He is also closing it with the phrase: صدق الله العظيم (Allah Almighty speaks the truth).
  - صَدُّو meaning, Allah has closed the door for them; so let them be.
- In summary, Allah is speaking to each one of us. He is telling us that nothing is more truthful than His words because He has no incentive. Our responsibility is to advocate guidance, but Allah is the One that guides.
- Allah takes oath in the Qur'an by different things – and He does it in this verse. He takes an oath by the Qur'an: His Word and His Book.
- When Allah takes an oath upon something, it shows us its honor and significance. According to Ibn Abbas, this is the most important oath; the Qur'an.
- Two meanings of ذِي الذِّكْرِ :
  - 1. Full of continuous reminder
    - The important part of the oath is to note that the Qur'an is a Book in which there is Dhikrukum; an ultimate reminder – it is full of continuous reminders.
    - One of the names of the Qur'an is Dhikr – it is a reminder. Hence, if a person continues to engage with the Qur'an knowing that it is speaking to them and reminding them, the Qur'an will keep them in check.
    - Every reminder a person needs is contained in the Qur'an. Hence, there is no need for anything else in our lives.

- The Qur'an gives us the necessary reminder at the right time as long as we're engaging with it, reciting it etc.
- 2. Reminder of past nations
  - The Qur'an contains all the discussions of the past nations; their habits, their actions, their beliefs as well as their outcomes.
- 3. Reminder of who Allah is
  - The best way to remember Allah is through the words that He gave us. Allah's Book will remind us of who He is in our life. Hence, if we stay away from it for too long, we will tend to forget about Him.
  - Allah said to Musa AS:

أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

*I am Allah! There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Me. So worship Me 'alone', and establish prayer for My remembrance. (20:14)*

## Ayah 2

- Two reasons a person will not be affected by the Qur'an:
  - فِي عِزَّةٍ – They have false honor due to their arrogance
  - وَشِقَاقٍ – They fear division; losing relationships, affiliations etc. and having to choose. It also means a heavy burden; the truth is burdensome for them externally and internally.

## Ayah 3

- كَم – Refers to a number and quantity that is uncountable. It shows us that countless nations were destroyed before the Quraysh.
- The reason why they cannot accept the Qur'an is because they think that they are Allah; He is the One that has عِزَّة.
- Allah reminds the Quraysh, despite the past nations' strength and power, they declared their belief when the punishment came to them. They called for help and cried out to Allah (i.e. like Firawn).
- Allah did not heed their cries nor did He save them at all because a person's shahada is only accepted if they declare it before death approaches them.
- By this time, tawba is not accepted and there is also no place to flee or escape, but to stand in front of Allah.

## Ayah 4

- The Quraysh were astonished by the sending of the Prophet (ﷺ); a person from amongst them who is a bringer of glad tidings and a warner.
- They could not deny the truth and the message the Prophet (ﷺ) brought. Hence, they denied his credibility and began dismissing him.
- Allah makes it clear that anyone that harbor these types of sentiments, feelings or beliefs towards the Prophet (ﷺ), may be a kafir.
- Before this was revealed, they claim the message is sihr, but after being overwhelmed, they claim that the Prophet (ﷺ) is a magician. And this was the first time they accused him of being a liar.

## Ayah 5

- Worshiping one God was considered something very weird for the Quraysh because they were used to worshipping idols.
- They claimed that the message of tawhid is a curious thing. However, it is not something difficult to understand nor is it weird or strange.
- This also speaks about the concept of having one dominant frame of reference; meaning Allah is where everything begins and ends.
- With one point of reference we will know, it is either haqq (truth) or batil (falsehood); it is unchangeable.
- The reason for the revelation of this ayah: Narrated Ibn 'Abbas:

مَرَضَ أَبُو طَالِبٍ فَجَاءَتْهُ قُرَيْشٌ وَجَاءَهُ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَعِنْدَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ مَجْلِسُ رَجُلٍ فَقَامَ أَبُو جَهْلٍ كَى يَمْنَعُهُ وَشَكَّوهُ إِلَى أَبِي طَالِبٍ فَقَالَ يَا ابْنَ أَخِي مَا تَرِيدُ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ قَالَ " إِنِّي أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ كَلِمَةً وَاحِدَةً تَدِينُ لَهُمْ بِهَا الْعَرَبُ وَتُؤَدِّي إِلَيْهِمُ الْعَجْمُ الْجَزِيَّةَ " . قَالَ كَلِمَةً وَاحِدَةً قَالَ " كَلِمَةً وَاحِدَةً " . قَالَ " يَا عَمَّ قُولُوا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ " . فَقَالُوا: إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا؟ ( ما سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ ) قَالَ فَنَزَلَ فِيهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ : (ص) \* وَالْقُرْآنُ ذِي الذِّكْرِ \* بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ ( إِلَى قَوْلِهِ : ( ما سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ ) .

"Abu Talib fell ill, so the Quraish went to see him, and the Prophet (ﷺ) went to see him. There was a gathering there with Abu Talib, so Abu Jahl stood up enraged, to prevent him (the Prophet (ﷺ) from entering)."

*He said: "He complained to Abu Talib. So he (Abu Talib) said: 'O my nephew! What is it that you want from your people?' He said: 'I only want one word from them, for which, if they were to say it, then the Arabs will become their followers, and the non-Arabs will pay Jizyah to them.' He said: 'One word?' He replied: 'One word.' So he said: 'O uncle! Let them say La Ilaha Illallah' so they replied: 'One God? We have not heard (the like) of this in the religion of these later days. This is nothing but an invention.'" He said: "So the (following) was revealed in the Qur'an about them: 'Sad. By the Qur'an full of reminding. Those who disbelieve are in false pride and opposition...' up to His saying: 'We have not heard (the like) of this in the religion of these later days. This is nothing but an invention (38:1-7).'" (Jami` at-Tirmidhi)*

- اَلْمَلَأَ – Refers to a big group of people
- The elite will always be challenged by the truth because it reframes their reality. Hence, they refuse to change themselves.
- After Hamza RA and Umar RA embraced Islam, the Quraysh grew rattled. Hence, they started plotting new policies.
- This ayah was revealed after Umar RA became Muslim, which was considered to be a great victory for Islam.
- When Islam grew, the group of elite Makkans gathered together to approach the Prophet (ﷺ) and they became more resolute in their stance.
- The Quraysh claimed that the Prophet (ﷺ) has an ulterior motive and wants an incentive for preaching his message; he wants to be king of Makkah etc.
- To derail the truth, they further claimed that those who accepted his message similarly were promised an incentive by him.

## Ayah 7

- When people are so removed from a certain reality, when being introduced to that reality, they would act like they never heard it before.
- Two statements the disbelievers would say to their prophets upon rejecting the message:
  - 1. This is what we saw our forefathers doing. Hence, we refuse to change.
  - 2. We have never come across the teachings before; the concept of tawhid, resurrection etc.



- If someone says مَا سَمِعْنَا they will have a hard time believing in haqq and they will constantly challenge haqq. As believers, we listen and obey.
- On the Day of Judgment, Allah said:

يَقُولُونَ يَلَيْتَنَّا أَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ

*They will say, "How we wish we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger." (33:66)*

- A person who professes as such truly believes that they are somebody when it comes to comparing themselves to the Deen. They will constantly compare what they hear to what they already know.
- اُخْتَلَقَ – Refers to fabrication. They accuse the Prophet (ﷺ) of fabricating lies.

## Ayah 8

- This is an extension of the discussion in ayah 4 in which they question the Prophet's reception of revelation.
- They thought it unlikely that the Prophet (ﷺ) would be singled out from among them to receive the Qur'an as they considered themselves more noble and deserving than him.
- They questioned why this Qur'an was not sent down to someone greater than him. But the reality is that even if another person were to receive it, they would not have accepted him either.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) was affected by their statements. Therefore, Allah consoles him by telling him to ignore their statements as they doubted His statements. They struggled to accept His message not because of His Messenger (ﷺ).
- This teaches us, when people call us out, they don't have a personal issue with us but they have an issue with the message. Hence, we cannot let our sensitivities affect our da'wah.
- The doubts the disbelievers have, stem from themselves in their own hearts; it is self-inflicted due to their weakness.
- Allah tells them that they will come to know the consequences when they receive their punishment and then will know what the truth actually is, just as the past nations did.