

Surah YaaSeen, the Heart of the Qur'an

The Arabic word for heart used in the Qur'an is "*Qalb*". A few times the word "*Al-'af-idah*" is used for heart and occasionally the Arabic word "*Sadr*" is translated as "heart."

It is important to note that here it is not the physical organ that is referred to as heart; rather, it is the metaphysical aspect of the human being. In this context, heart is the seat of *Imaan* (Faith) or of *Kufr* (disbelief). It is the place where guidance is accepted or rejected. It has been stated that only humans and Jinn kind have *Qalb* (Heart) and that animal and lower beings do not. Some scholars believe that *Qalb* includes Soul and intellect. It is the belief of this author that *Qalb* is a separate entity from Soul or intellect.

In the Hadith, Surah YaaSeen has is referred to as *Qalb* or "The heart" of the Qur'an. In his commentary on Surah YaaSeen, in the book *Tafseer-e-Namoonah*, Ayatullah Nasir Makaram Shirazi states this Hadith of Prophet Muhammad ^{**}(pbuh&p) from the book (Majmaul-Bayaan)

"Everything has a heart and the heart of the Qur'an is Surah YaaSeen."

We shall first review the references the Qur'an has made about *Qalb* and some relevant Hadiths. Then it may be possible to understand why Surah YaaSeen is called The *Qalb* or the heart of the Qur'an.

The word *Qalb* (heart) mentioned in the Qur'an.

- ❖ *"There is a disease in their (hypocrites) hearts, so *Allah (God) added to their disease..." (2:10)*
- ❖ *"Then your (Bani Israel's) hearts hardened after that, so they were like rocks..." (2:74)*
- ❖ *"Those are they (Who opposed Allah and His Prophet) for whom Allah does not desire that He should purify their hearts" (5:41)*
- ❖ *"So Allah seals the hearts of the unbelievers." (7:101)*
- ❖ *"Know that Allah stands between a man and his heart." (8:24)*
- ❖ *"Had you spent all that is in the earth, you could not have united their hearts, but Allah united them..." (8:63)*
- ❖ *"We lay veils upon their hearts lest they understand it..." (17:46)*

- ❖ *“The Day on which property will not avail, nor sons, except him who comes to Allah with a pure heart.” (26:79)*
- ❖ *“God has not assigned to any man two hearts in his breast.” (33:4)*
- ❖ *“Their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah.” (39:23)*
- ❖ *Whose hearts Allah has tested for their piety [Taqwa] (49:3)*

Thus according to the Qur’an, the hearts are:

- Alive (to guidance)
- Dead (absence of Tawheed)
- Hard (obstinate in disbelief)
- Soft (in remembrance of Allah)
- Pure (free of materialism, empty for Allah)
- Impure (polytheism, disbelief)
- Diseased (un-Godly)
- Sealed (will not receive Truth)
- Pious (God conscious)
- Veiled (from guidance)
- Open (to truth)
- Blossom (become enlightened)
- United (with the believers)
- One heart in each person (it contains either Allah or the world)

Imam Ali’s (A.S.) sayings in Nahj-ul Balaagha:

- Learn the Qur’an, because it is the best in blossoming (Enlightening) of the hearts. (Sermon 109)
- It (The Qur’an) is the life for a dead heart, sight for the blind eye, and hearing for a deaf ear... (Sermon 132)
- Worse than the ailment of the body is the disease of the heart. (A Saying of his)
- He, whose piety is less, his heart dies. (Saying #359)
- When asked if he had seen God, Amir al-Mu’mineen replied, “Do I worship one that I did not see? Eyes do not see him face to face, but hearts perceive Him through the realities of belief.” (Sermon 178)

In light of what we have studied so far, one may summarize that heart of a Mu’min is that faculty which is the seat of Imaan (Faith). It submits to *Allah (God), it purifies itself, it is free of material attachments and only Allah has place in it. It sees (perceives) Allah Who cannot be seen with physical eyes. A heart that is "alive" has “eyes” that recognize the truth and has "ears" that hear and accept guidance. It is blessed with piety and God consciousness. It is ready to meet its Lord in a pure and submissive state. It is free of spiritual diseases.

Surah YaaSeen. This is the thirty-sixth Chapter of the Qur'an. In the ahadith, it is referred to as the "heart of the Qur'an." The Surah is comprised of 83 verses. YaaSeen is also a name of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&p). The Surah deals with many topics covering aspects of faith, worldly life, life and death, life in the Hereafter, punishment and reward, heaven, hell etc.

A partial listing of the topics in Surah YaaSeen with verse numbers is listed below. (For details, please refer to the Qur'anic text, translation and commentary.)

- The Prophet Of Islam is addressed by one of his names (YaaSeen) and Allah testifies, swearing by the "wise Qur'an" that that he was a Prophet sent by the Almighty on the divinely mandated mission to warn people who had not received prior guidance (Verses 1-6)
- Those who were obstinate in accepting guidance, Allah punished them by an increase in their obstinacy and disbelief by setting up barriers to their understanding. (7-10)
- Those who believed in the Beneficent Lord unseen were given good tidings of forgiveness and reward. (11)
- Allah alone gives life to *the dead*. All knowledge is preserved in a manifest guide (*Imaamim-mubeen*). (12)
- The disbelievers of the city of Antioch rejected the ambassadors or messengers sent (disciples of Jesus A.S.) and stoned to death a believer (*Mu'min Aali YaaSeen*). He was immediately made to enter Paradise. (13-27)
- Thereupon the Divine Wrath destroyed the people. (28-310)
- Everyone will be brought back to Allah on the day of accounting. (32)
- Allah has recounted many of His signs in creation to appeal to the human intellect and reasoning. The dead Earth's coming to life, alternation of day and night, variety of fruits and gardens, the movements of the sun and the moon. Allah created everything in pairs, etc. (33-40)

- The onset of the Day of Judgment and gathering of His subjects in front of Allah in three stages is described. (49-53)
- God is just. Humankind will be recompensed with what it earned. (54)
- A description of Heaven and Hell is given. (55-67)
- Only hearts that are “alive” receive (and heed) the warning. (70)
- Allah reprimands the contentious folks by reminding them that Allah originated their creation from a tiny sperm (in a drop of seminal fluid). Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the Earth and He can easily bring the dead back to life. (77-79)
- When Allah intends something He only gives the command “Be, and it Is” [*Kun Fayakoon*]
- In the end, Allah the Glorified reminds us that the Kingdom of all things belongs to Him and that all shall return to Him.

Summary. The Surah YaaSeen encompasses belief in Allah (God), the Tawheed (oneness of Allah), Prophethood of Muhammad (pbuh&p), the revealed scripture Qur’an, belief and disbelief, life and death, life after death, Day of Judgment, punishment and reward. The Surah also informs us that everyone will ultimately return to Allah. When Allah intends a thing He simply commands by “saying” ”Be” and it “Is” (instantly accomplished). That is easy for Allah. This Surah contains the core message of the Qur’an.

Using the analogy of importance of the (*Qalb*) to the soul, one may consider Surah YaaSeen to be “The heart of the Qur’an.”

*Allah is the proper name of God Almighty

** (pbuh&p) It is abbreviation of “Peace be upon him and his progeny” as token of respect for Prophet Muhammed

(The End)

References: 1. English translation of the Qur’an by M.H. Shakir 2. English translation from Tafseer-e-Namoonah (Urdu) by Shaykh Makaram Shirazi 3. Commentary of the Qur’an by Agha Mirza Mahdi Pooya and S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali 4. Nahjul Balagha web site: www.nahjulbalagha.com

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