

## Surat Yaasin verses 13 - 17

### *Learning objectives:*

- To continue with the tafsir of Surat Yasin up to verse 17
- To continue with the memorisation of Surat Yasin up to verse 17

### Verse 13

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ

*Cite for them the example of the inhabitants of the town when the apostles came to it. (13)*

The Qur'an now presents the Quraysh with an example from history of a similar situation that had arisen in the past, where guidance was provided to a people, but they rejected the guidance and the resulting consequence.

From verse 13, we learn that it is possible for multiple messengers to be sent to a particular community at the same time. Another famous example of this is that of Musa (A) and Harun (A), who were both appointed as prophets and sent for the same mission.

Historians are not sure exactly which city the messengers mentioned in this verse were sent to. One possibility is the city of Antioch.

Furthermore, we are not sure whether these messengers were actually prophets of God themselves or representatives of Prophet Isa (A), who were sent by him to spread his message to the people of Antioch.

### Verse 14

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ مُّرْسَلُونَ

*When We sent to them two [apostles], they impugned both of them. Then We reinforced them with a third, and they said, 'We have indeed been sent to you.' [36:14]*

This verse explains that 2 messengers were first sent to this community, but both of them were rejected by the people, so a third messenger was sent to them and the 3 of them preached together. This third messenger was someone who had influence in the community and as a result, they started to gather some followers from the community.

### Verse 15

قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ

*They said, 'You are no other than human beings like us, and the All-beneficent has not sent down anything, and you are only lying.' [36:15]*

Reports suggest that the messengers gained about 40 followers before they were taken to the rulers of the community.

“The All-Beneficent (al-Rahman) has not sent down anything...”: This passage shows that these people, similarly to the Quraysh, believed in an All-Powerful, Merciful God. However, they believed that this God

fully transcendent and too Great to involve Himself in the creation. Instead, there were hundreds of demi-gods who were entrusted with running the world and looking after the affairs of human beings. These demi-gods were intercessors between human beings and the All-Powerful God. Hence, they worshipped these gods and asked them for their needs.

Furthermore, we are given one of the arguments mentioned by the rulers, which is actually an argument that is mentioned frequently in the Qur'an, as put forth by many different communities who rejected Allah (SWT)'s message: "You are no more than mere humans like us!" It seems that people found it very hard to accept that God could communicate to humans and send them as messengers to the rest of mankind.

Here are a few other examples of such arguments presented elsewhere in the Qur'an:

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ بَشَرًا رَسُولًا

**Nothing has kept these people from believing when guidance came to them, but their saying, 'Has Allah sent a human as an apostle?!'**

قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَلَائِكَةٌ يَمْشُونَ مُطْمَئِنِّينَ لَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ  
مَلَكًَا رَسُولًا

**Say, 'Had there been angels in the earth, walking around and residing [in it like humans do], We would have sent down to them an angel from the heaven as apostle.' [17:94-5]**

In the above verses, the people argued that if God wanted to send down messengers, why doesn't He send angels as messengers instead of humans. Allah (SWT) replies by saying that if angels resided on Earth instead of human beings, the messengers would also have been angels. However, it is important that the messengers chosen by Allah (SWT) are such that human being can take them as role models and use them as guides in their daily lives.

Furthermore, part of faith is belief in the unseen and this is part of the purpose and test in this world. If Allah (SWT) would have sent angels as messengers, the purpose of this world would become nullified and this life would cease to exist. This idea has been alluded to in the following verse:

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ ۖ وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكًَا لَّقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يُنظَرُونَ

**They say, 'Why has not an angel been sent down to him?' Were We to send down an angel, the matter would surely be decided, and then they would not be granted any respite. [6:8]**

Another example of this kind of argumentation is seen in the following verse:

وَقَالُوا مَا لِ هَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ ۗ لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ  
مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا

**And they say, 'What sort of apostle is this who eats food and walks in the marketplaces? Why has not an angel been sent down to him so as to be a warner along with him?' [25:7]**

People found it very difficult to accept that Allah (SWT) can send an ordinary human being as a prophet, who also has ordinary human needs, like that of food and the need to visit the marketplaces to purchase whatever he requires.

Many of us today also have a similar type of problem in relation to our understanding of the Ma'sumin (A). Some of us raise their status so high that they are no longer considered human beings, while others among us lower their status to such an extent that we attribute sins to them. The Ma'sumin (A) were human beings and had human needs just like the rest of us. However, they represent the peak and perfection of what it means to be human. In this way, we are able to relate to them and take them as our role models in daily life, while at the same time also comprehend the great potential of the human being.

Another big reason why people rejected the prophets and messengers was due to their arrogance: *"If God wanted to choose a representative to guide human beings, it would have been me, not him."*

### **Verses 16-17**

قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ

*They said, 'Our Lord knows that we have indeed been sent to you, [36:16]*

وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

*and our duty is only to communicate in clear terms.' [36:17]*

From the verses above, it can be understood that many arguments took place between the rulers of the community and the messengers, but the rulers continued to reject the messengers. It is from the style of the Qur'an that it does not go into unnecessary details. When it was clear that they would not listen, the discussion was cut off and the messengers informed the rulers that their duty was only to convey the message, not force them to believe. The messengers then returned to the people of the community and continued to preach their message.

We will inshaAllah continue with the story in the next lesson.