

(Note: Wherever the word “you” or “your” is singular and refers to one human being, it is printed with an italic y, as in: you. Wherever such a word refers to God, the letter y is printed in capital, as in: You.)

For Fast 26 – September 6

Topic: (S) Sins

Sin harms the soul:

- “Say: Shall I seek a Lord other than Allah, while He is the Lord of all things? *And no soul earns (evil) but against itself.* Nor does a bearer of burden bear another’s burden.” — 6:164

(1) By committing sin, a person harms his or her own soul. It is that harm which is the punishment for the sin. (2) Every person is a bearer of burden of his or her own deeds. No one can bear the burden of another’s sins.

- “Whoever goes aright, goes aright only for the good of his own soul; and whoever goes astray, *goes astray only to its detriment.* And no bearer of a burden can bear the burden of another.” — 17:15

The one who does good benefits his own soul, and the one who commits sins harms his own soul.

- “Indeed, whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, those are the companions of the Fire; in it they abide.” — 2:81

The inmates of the Fire are here stated to be those who earn evil, and find themselves beset on every side by their evil deeds. These are the people who give themselves up to evil, and who therefore ultimately find themselves in the power of evil, which even in this life, but more palpably in the life after death, assumes the form of a burning fire. But the one who struggles against evil, however long that struggle may take, to overcome an evil inclination, is not the one who earns evil, because the earnest struggle in which the fighter against evil hates and detests evil, and seeks to overcome it, always ends in a victory for the good and noble qualities that are in every human being.

- “And whoever does evil or wrongs his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allah, will find Allah Forgiving, Merciful. And whoever commits a sin, *commits it only against himself.* And Allah is ever Knowing, Wise. And whoever commits a fault or a sin, then accuses of it one innocent, he indeed takes upon himself the burden of a slander and a manifest sin.” — 4:110-112

Giving up sins:

- “If you shun the great things which you are forbidden, We shall do away with your evil (inclinations) and make you enter an honourable place of entering.” — 4:31

If a person avoids committing sins, the evil inclinations within him die also. Some people divide sins into two categories: some sins being considered as

kaḥīra, meaning major sins or the “great things” mentioned here, and others as *ṣaḡhīra* meaning minor sins. There is no basis for this division. Everyone imagines his or her sins to be minor and the sins of others to be major! A sin is at a minor stage when it is only a thought in the mind. When a person starts planning to commit it, it rises to a higher stage. When it is actually committed, it is a major sin.

- “Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and keep up prayer. Surely prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil; and certainly the remembrance of Allah is the greatest (force). And Allah knows what you do.” — 29:45

This verse also lays down the right principle for getting rid of the bondage of sin in the words *the remembrance of Allah is the greatest*, i.e., *the most powerful and effective restraint* upon sin. It is a living belief in the Divine power, knowledge, and goodness that restrains people from walking in the ways of His displeasure. “Remembrance of Allah” refers not only to man remembering God, but also to God’s remembrance of man or His raising him to a place of eminence. Through prayer to God, not only is man freed from the bondage of sin, but (which is greater than this) he is raised to a place of higher eminence.

- “And avoid open sins and secret ones. Surely they who earn sin will be rewarded for what they have earned.” — 6:120

Muslims are here commanded to consider *open* and *secret* sins to be equally hateful. In fact there are very few people who commit open sins as compared with those who are guilty of secret sins.

- “And those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong their souls, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins. And who forgives sins but Allah? And they do not persist knowingly in what they do.” — 3:135
- “And those who do evil deeds, then repent after that and believe — your Lord after that is surely Forgiving, Merciful.” — 7:153
- “And He (Allah) it is Who accepts repentance from His servants and pardons evil deeds, and He knows what you do” — 42:25
- “Say: O My servants who have been reckless against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; surely Allah forgives sins altogether. He is indeed the Forgiving, the Merciful.” — 39:53

Some prayers asking forgiveness for sins:

- “Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves; and if You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we shall certainly be from among the losers.” — 7:23

- “Our Lord, do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not lay on us a burden as You did lay on those before us. Our Lord, do not impose on us (afflictions) which we have not the strength to bear. And pardon us! And grant us protection!¹ And have mercy on us! You are our Patron, so grant us victory over the disbelieving people².” — 2:286

1. “Pardon us” refers to past sins committed. The word used for *protection* indicates protection from commission of sins in future.

2. The context of this verse has no connection with fighting a war. The “victory over the disbelieving people” indicates victory in convincing them of the truth of Islam. Also the “disbelieving people” may not literally mean any people but may refer to the forces of disbelief within a person, since these lead him to commit sins.

- “Our Lord, surely we have heard a Crier calling to the faith, saying: Believe in your Lord. So we do believe. Our Lord, grant us protection from our sins and remove our evils and make us die with the righteous.” — 3:193