145728 - Tafseer of the verse “So on that Day no question will be asked of man or jinn as to his sin” [ar-Rahmaan 55:39]

the question

What is the meaning of the verse that says that man will not be questioned about his sin on the Day of Resurrection?.

Detailed answer

Perhaps the questioner is referring to the verse in which Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “So on that Day no question will be asked of man or jinn as to his sin” [ar-Rahmaan 55:39].

This is one of the verses in Soorat ar-Rahmaan that speak of the terrors of the Day of Resurrection and explain that one aspect of the terror of that great Day is that no human or jinn will be questioned about his sin.

The scholars have given a number of interpretations for this verse:

1.

That humans and jinn will not be questioned on the Day of Resurrection by way of finding out about their sins, because Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, knows best about them. But He will question them by way of making a statement or a rebuke or telling off. This is more frightening and serves to emphasise the horror of what will happen on the Day of Resurrection.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

“no question will be asked of man or jinn as to his sin” – why? Because everything is known. What is meant here is that there will be no questioning by way of finding out, because all things are known. As for the kind of asking that is intended as a stern rebuke, that will take place. Allah, may He be exalted, says:

“And (remember) the Day (Allah) will call to them, and say: What answer gave you to the Messengers?

Then the news of a good answer will be obscured to them on that day, and they will not be able to ask one another”

[al-Qasas 28:65]

“Except those on the Right, (i.e. the pious true believers of Islamic Monotheism);

In Gardens (Paradise) they will ask one another,

About Al-Mujrimoon (polytheists, criminals, disbelievers, etc.), (And they will say to them):

What has caused you to enter Hell?

They will say: We were not of those who used to offer their Salat (prayers)”

[al-Muddaththir 74:39-42].

And Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, will say to the people of Hell when they are thrown into it (interpretation of the meaning):

“Did there not come to you, your Messengers with (clear) evidences and signs? They will say: Yes”

[Ghaafir 40:50].

So they will not be asked about their sin by way of finding out; rather they will be asked by way of telling off and rebuking. What is mentioned about humans and jinn being asked about their sins (“Did you do it or not?”) is questioning that is aimed at rebuking and telling off. There is a difference between questioning that is aimed at finding out and questioning that is aimed as a rebuke, so there is no contradiction between the verses. The verses that speak of them being questioned refer to questioning by way of rebuke and the verses that say that they will not be questioned refer to questioning that is aimed at finding out, because everything is already known and recorded. End quote.

Tafseer al-Qur'aan (from al-Hujuraat to al-Hadeed), p. 317

2.

One of the frightening events that will take place on that Day is that Allah will place a seal on the hearts of the disbelievers and hypocrites, and their hands and feet will speak of what they used to do. They will not be questioned at that time; rather their bodies will be questioned and will bear witness against them, speaking of their sins.

3.

Because of the horror of what the disbelievers encounter on the Day of Resurrection, they will be recognised by the blackening of their faces and the bleariness of their eyes. So there will be no need to ask them about their sins when the signs of disgrace have already appeared on them. This is also a source of great terror and a difficult situation on the Day of Resurrection. This does not contradict the true questioning that will occur at another stage, because the Day of Resurrection will be a long day, with various stages.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The verse (interpretation of the meaning): "So on that Day no question will be asked of man or jinn as to his sin" [ar-Rahmaan 55:39] is similar to the verse in which Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "That will be a Day when they shall not speak (during some part of it), And they will not be permitted to put forth any excuse" [al-Mursalaat 77:35-36]. This is one stage. And there will be another stage during which people will be questioned about all their deeds. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "So, by your Lord (O Muhammad SAW), We shall certainly call all of them to account. For all that they used to do" [al-Hijr 15:92-93]. Hence Qataadah quoted the words "So on that Day no question will be asked of man or jinn as to his sin" [ar-Rahmaan 55:39] and said: The questioning will have occurred, then a seal will be placed over the people's mouths, and their hands and feet will tell of what they used to do.

'Ali ibn Abi Talhah said, quoting from Ibn 'Abbaas: He will not ask them, Did you used to do such and such? Because He knows better than they do about that. Rather he will say: Why did you do

such and such? This is another view.

Mujaahid said concerning the verse: The angels will not ask about the sinners, because they will be known by their marks (blackened faces – cf. ar-Rahmaan 55:41). This is a third view.

It seems that this will come when instructions have been issued to take them to Hell. At that time they will not be asked about their sins; rather they will be taken to it and thrown into it, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): “The Mujrimoon (polytheists, criminals, sinners, etc.) will be known by their marks” [ar-Rahmaan 55:41], i.e., by marks that will appear on them.

Al-Hasan and Qataadah said: They will recognise them by their blackened faces and the bleariness of their eyes. I say: Similarly, the believers will be recognised by the bright marks on their faces and limbs from the traces of wudoo’. End quote.

Tafseer al-Qur’aan al-‘Azeem, 7/499

Al-‘Allaamah al-Ameen ash-Shanqeeti (may Allah have mercy on him) says:

Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “Then surely, We shall question those (people) to whom it (the Book) was sent…” [al-A‘raaf 7:6]. This verse indicates that Allah will question all people on the Day of Resurrection. There are similar verses, such as the following:

“So, by your Lord (O Muhammad), We shall certainly call all of them to account”

[al-Hijr 15:92]

“But stop them, verily they are to be questioned”

[as-Saaffaat37:24]

“And (remember) the Day (Allah) will call to them, and say: What answer gave you to the Messengers?”

[al-Qasas 28:65].

And there are other verses that indicate the opposite of that, such as the following:

“So on that Day no question will be asked of man or jinn as to his sin”

[ar-Rahmaan 55:39]

“But the Mujrimoon (criminals, disbelievers, polytheists, sinners, etc.) will not be questioned of their sins”

[al-Qasas 28:78].

The answer (to this apparent contradiction) consists of the following points:

1.

This is the best answer because it is what is indicated by the Qur’aan, which is that questioning is of two types: questioning by way of rebuke and telling off, which usually starts with the word “Lima (Why)…?”, and questioning that is aimed at finding out, which usually starts with the word “Hal…?” (an Arabic word which signals that what follows is a question). If the question starts with the word Lima, it is a question by way of rebuke; and if it starts with the word Hal, it is a question aimed at finding out.

We can see from the context of the Qur’aan that all questions that will be put to them, as stated in the Qur’aan, are questions that are intended as a rebuke, as in the verses in which Allah says:

“But stop them, verily they are to be questioned. ‘What is the matter with you? Why do you not help one another (as you used to do in the world)?’”

[as-Saaffaat 37:24-35]

“Is this magic, or do you not see?”

[at-Toor 52:14]

“Did not the Messengers come to you from yourselves”

[az-Zumar 39:71]

“Did no warner come to you?”

[al-Mulk 67:8]

and there are other similar verses.

And Allah will ask the Messengers: What did you respond? – As a rebuke to those who disbelieved in them. This is similar to the questioning of the girl who was buried alive, for what sin she was killed? (cf. at-Takweer 81:9) – this is a rebuke to the one who killed her.

2.

On the Day of Resurrection there will be various stages, at some of which they will be questioned and at others they will not be questioned.

End quote.

Daf‘ Eehaam al-Idtiraab ‘an ‘Aayaat al-Kitaab, p. 15

And Allah knows best.