

39679 - The answer to the question posed by disbelievers, “Can Allaah create a rock that He cannot lift?”

the question

This is a question, which is supposedly asked by missionaries. “Can Allah create a rock which He can’t lift?” How do we respond to this?.

Detailed answer

This question – and others like it – contain a great contradiction. Many disbelievers try to use such questions in their debates with Muslims, seeking to force the respondent to say either “No He can’t” in which case they will say, “How can He be a god if He cannot create something?” or if he says, “Yes, He can,” they will say: “How can He be a god if He is unable to carry or lift this rock?”

The answer is:

This question is not valid at all because the power of Allaah is not connected to irrationalities. How can He be a god if He is unable to lift their “rock,” when one of the attributes of Allaah is power? Can there be any attribute in any created thing that is greater than the attributes of its Creator?

Professor Sa’d Rustam answered this question in a sound scientific manner, which we will quote in full here. He said:

The power of Allaah – which is undoubtedly absolute and unlimited – is connected to things that are rationally possible, not things that are rationally impossible. No matter how absolute and limitless His power, it must still remain within the bounds of possibility, and it is not connected to irrationalities. This is not a limitation of it. In order to clarify this point we will give some examples:

We ask all of these bishops and theologians: Can God create another god like Him? If they say yes, we say to them: How can this created being be a god if he is created? How can he be like God when he has a beginning, whereas God exists from eternity? In fact the phrase “creating a god” is a sophism or false argument, and is a contradiction in terms, because the mere fact that something is created means that it cannot be a god. This question is like asking could God create “a god who is not a god”? it is self-evident that the answer can only be: The power of Allaah has nothing to do with that, because the idea that something can be a god and not a god is illogical and is irrational, and the power of Allaah has nothing to do with irrationalities.

Another example: We may also ask them: Can God really expel anyone from under His control? If they say yes, they have imposed a limit on the control of Allaah, and if they say no – which is correct – they have agreed with us that the power of Allaah is absolute and has nothing to do with irrationalities, because it is rationally impossible for any created being to be expelled from the control of its Creator.

A third example: One day one of the disbelievers asked me: Can your Lord create a rock that is so huge that He would be unable to move it? And he added in a sarcastic manner: If you say, yes He can, you will have stated that your Lord is unable to move the rock, and this indicates that He is not a god, but if you tell me, No, He cannot, you will have admitted that He is not able to do all things, therefore He is not a god.

I answered this disbeliever simply: Yes, it is not part of the power of Allaah that He is able to create a rock that He is unable to move, because everything that Allaah creates He is able to move, but the fact that it is impossible for the power of Allaah to be connected to the creation of this supposed rock does not indicate that He is lacking in power. Rather – on the contrary – it is indicative of His complete power, because this question of yours is like asking: Can Allaah be unable to do something that may be rationally possible? No doubt, if we say no, this does not mean that the power of Allaah is limited, rather it is an affirmation of the completeness of His power, because not being incapable means having power. If we say that Allaah cannot be unaware of or forget anything, saying that does not mean that He is incapable or is lacking, rather it is an affirmation of His perfection and complete power and knowledge.

The Four Gospels and the Epistles of Paul and John deny the divinity of Christ as it is denied by the Qur'aan, by Sa'd Rustam.

And Allaah knows best.