

Foreword

By Ayatullah Shaykh Mirza Ja'far Subhani

The asking of questions and giving of their answers – as a pretext to guiding others – is one of the methods which the Qur`an has placed a great emphasis upon. Indeed, human society has been invited to approach the scholars and those aware of their cultural surroundings to ask them questions in order to overcome their ignorance, just as we read:

فَاسْأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“So then ask those of the Reminder if you do not know.”¹

The Qur`an has not sufficed with this ruling of the people asking [and waiting for their answer from their scholars] and thus, we see that in some of the questions posed at the time of the message [revelation of the Qur`an], the answers were clearly delivered to the people [by the Prophet of Islam (SAWW) himself]. Such verses in the Qur`an are noted by the word ‘يسألونك’ or ‘They ask you (O’ Muhammad!)’ – and this phrase has been used fifteen times² in various chapters of the Qur`an.

The world today, thanks to the various tools of mass communication, has been transformed into a global village in which the people’s ideologies and thoughts are quickly disseminated throughout the world. Due to this, the youth of today come across a series of new questions and there is nowhere they can turn in order to solve their dilemmas except the scholars of the Divine teachings.

In the hopes of fulfilling the noble goal of guiding the youth and providing answers to their questions, a department was formed at the ‘Imam as-Sadiq (AS) Teaching and Research Institute’ under the banner of the ‘Department of Answering the Theological Questions’ in which a group of graduate students who have specialized in the Science of Kalam (Theology) have taken it upon themselves to answer the various theological questions coming to this organization by keeping in mind the horizon of thought of the youth.

At this point in time, we are pleased to present a section of the questions and answers which have been compiled under the auspices of this humble servant and have been researched and written by the respected scholar, Aqa Akbar Asad Ali Zadeh and to present this work to the scholars and researchers of the community.

It is our hope that this small step is but an introduction to greater leaps and bounds in this field and that Allah, the Beneficent, accepts this insignificant service and grants us success in being able to fulfill our religious responsibility.

Ja'far Subhani

2nd of Jumadi al-Awwal, 1422 ah

1. Surat al-Nahl (16), Verse 43

2. The phrase is seen in the following verses:

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنِ اتَّقَى وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

“They question you concerning the new moons. Say, ‘They are timekeeping signs for the people and for the sake of hajj.’ It is not piety that you come into houses from their rear; rather piety is personified by one who is God wary, and come into houses from their doors, and be wary of God, so that you may be felicitous.” (2: 189)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلَّوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

“They ask you as to what they should spend. Say, ‘Whatever wealth you spend, let it be for parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, and the traveller.’ And whatever good that you may do, God indeed knows it.” (2:215)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَاعُوا وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

“They ask you concerning warfare in the holy month. Say, ‘It is an outrageous thing to fight in it, but to keep people from God’s way, and to be unfaithful to Him, and to keep people from the Holy Mosque, and to expel its people from it are more outrageous with God. And faithlessness is graver than killing. And they will not cease fighting you until they turn you away from your religion, if they can. And whoever of you turns away from his religion and dies faithless —they are the ones whose works have failed in this world and the Hereafter. They shall be the inmates of the Fire, and they shall remain in it forever.’” (2:217)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say, ‘There is a great sin in both of them, and some profits for the people, but their sinfulness outweighs their profit.’ And they ask you as to what they should spend. Say, ‘All that is surplus.’ Thus does God clarify His signs for you so that you may reflect.” (2:219)

فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَى قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ إِنْ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

“...about the world and the Hereafter. And they ask you concerning the orphans. Say, ‘It is better to set right their affairs, and if you intermingle with them, then they are your brothers: God knows the one who causes corruption from the one who brings about reform, and had God wished He would have put you to hardship.’ Indeed God is all-mighty, all-wise.” (2:220)

وَسَأَلُوكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذَى فَأَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهُرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

“They ask you concerning intercourse during menses. Say, ‘It is hurtful.’ So keep away from wives during the menses, and do not approach them till they are clean. And when they become clean, go into them as God has commanded you. Indeed God loves the penitent and He loves those who keep clean.” (2:222)

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ سَأَلُوا مُوسَى أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا أَرِنَا اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ بِظُلْمِهِمْ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَعَفَوْنَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ وَأَتَيْنَا مُوسَى سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا

“The People of the Book ask you to bring down for them a Book from the sky. Certainly they asked Moses for something greater than that, for they said, ‘Show us God visibly,’ whereat a thunderbolt seized them for their wrongdoing. Then they took up the Calf for worship, after all the manifest proofs that had come to them. Yet We excused that, and We gave Moses a manifest authority.” (4: 153)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أَحَلَّ لَهُمْ قُلْ أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُمْ مِنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّبِينَ تُعَلِّمُونَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا أَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

“They ask you as to what is lawful to them. Say, ‘All the good things are lawful to you.’ As for what you have taught hunting dogs to catch, teaching them out of what God has taught you, eat of what they catch for you and mention God’s Name over it, and be wary of God. Indeed God is swift at reckoning.” (5:4)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَقْتِهَا إِلَّا هُوَ نُفِصَتْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً يَسْأَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

“They question you concerning the Hour, when it will set in. Say, ‘Its knowledge is only with my Lord: none except Him shall manifest it at its time. It will weigh heavy on the heavens and the earth. It will not overtake you but suddenly.’ They ask you as if you were in the know of it. Say, ‘Its knowledge is only with God, but most people do not know.’” (7: 187)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَنْفَالِ قُلِ الْأَنْفَالُ لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ فَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

“They ask you concerning the anfal. Say, ‘The anfal belong to God and the Apostle.’ So be wary of God and settle your differences, and obey God and His Apostle, should you be faithful.” (8: 1)

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

“They question you concerning the Spirit. Say, ‘The Spirit is of the command of my Lord, and you have not been given of the knowledge except a few of you.’” (17:85)

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ ذِي الْقُرْنَيْنِ قُلْ سَأَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُ ذِكْرًا

“They question you concerning Dhul Qarnayn. Say, ‘I will relate to you an account of him.’” (18:83)

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنْسِفُهَا رَبِّي نَسْفًا

“They question you concerning the mountains. Say, ‘My Lord will scatter them like dust.’” (20: 105)

يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُدْرِكُ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُونُ قَرِيبًا

“The people question you concerning the Hour. Say, ‘Its knowledge is only with God.’ What do you know, maybe the Hour is near.” (33:63)

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا

“They ask you concerning the Hour, when it will set in.” (79:42)

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