10673 - Settling of scores among the animals on the Day of Resurrection

the question

I have heard that there will be a settling of scores among the animals on the Day of Resurrection. Is this true? If it is true, how will that be done if they are not accountable?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It was narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) – in a hadeeth that has many corroborating reports and isnaads – that he said: “Allaah will judge between His creation, jinn, men and animals. On that Day, Allaah will let the hornless animal settle its score with the horned until, when there is nothing left to be settled, Allaah will say to them, ‘Be dust.’ At that point the kaafir will say, ‘Would that I were dust.’”

(Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in al-Silsilat al-Saheehah, no. 1966)

Among the versions of this hadeeth which we may mention are the following:

·“All creatures will settle the scores between them, even the hornless animal with the horned one, and even one ant with another)

·It was narrated from Abu Dharr that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was sitting, and two sheep locked horns until one of them defeated and subdued the other. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) smiled and someone asked him, “Why are you smiling, O Messenger of Allaah?” He said, “It is amazing. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, their score will be settled on the Day of Resurrection.”

·“O Abu Dharr, do you know what they are fighting over?” He said, “No.” He said, “But Allaah knows and He will judge between them.”

Al-Nawawi said in Sharh Muslim, under the hadeeth of al-tarjumah:

“This clearly indicates that the animals will be gathered on the Day of Resurrection and that they will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection like humans who are accountable, and as children, the insane, and those whom the call did not reach will also be resurrected. There is also evidence in the Qur’aan and Sunnah to support that. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And when the wild beasts shall be gathered together”

[al-Takweer 81:5]

If there is a phrase in a text of sharee’ah whose apparent meaning is not impossible whether according to sharee’ah or reason, then it must be interpreted according to its apparent meaning. The scholars said: reward and punishment are not essential features of the gathering and the resurrection. The settling of scores between the hornless and horned animals is not based on accountability, because they are not held accountable, rather it is retaliation in kind for the sake of justice. And Allaah knows best.”

Shaykh ‘Ali al-Qaari quoted him in al-Murqaah (4/761) as saying:

“If it is said that a sheep is not accountable, how can scores be settled with it? (Our response is) that Allaah does as He wills, and He cannot be questioned as to what He does. The point is to demonstrate to people that rights will not be neglected, rather the rights of the oppressed will be settled at the expense of the oppressor”

al-Qaari’ said: “This is a good point. The point is that this settling of scores points in the most eloquent manner to the perfect justice with which all those who are accountable will be dealt. If this is the situation with regard to animals who are not accountable, then how about those who possess reason, lowly and noble, strong and weak?”

See al-Silsilah al-Saheehah, p. 612