14490 - The kaafir’s reckoning in the Hereafter

the question

The believer will face his reckoning on the Day of Resurrection, whether his deeds are good or bad. But how will the reckoning of the kaafir be, when he is not required to observe the same duties as the believer?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

This question is based on a misconception, for the same requirements are demanded of the kaafir as of the believer, but he is not obliged to do them in this world. The indication that he is subject to the same requirements is to be found in the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

“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) (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 the Salaah (prayers),

Nor we used to feed Al-Miskeen (the poor);

And we used to talk falsehood (all that which Allah hated) with vain talkers.

And we used to belie the Day of Recompense’” [al-Muddaththir 74:39-46]

If their suffering were not due to the fact that they did not pray or feed the poor, they would not

mention these things. This indicates that they will be punished concerning (neglect of) the minor issues of Islam. This is based on the texts but it is also the matter of common sense, for if Allah will punish His believing slave for what he failed to do with regard to religious obligations, how can He not punish His disbelieving slave? Rather I could add that the kaafir will be punished for everything that Allah has blessed him with in this world, his food, drink, etc. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Those who believe and do righteous good deeds, there is no sin on them for what they ate (in the past), if they fear Allah (by keeping away from His forbidden things), and believe and do righteous good deeds, and again fear Allah and believe, and once again fear Allah and do good deeds with Ihsaan (perfection). And Allah loves the good-doers” [al-Maa'idah 5:93]

The apparent meaning of the aayah is that the believers are relieved of any blame for what they eat, and it may be understood that the kaafirs are to blame for what they eat. Similarly Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Who has forbidden the adornment with clothes given by Allah, which He has produced for His slaves, and At-Tayyibaat [all kinds of Halaal (lawful) things] of food?’ Say: ‘They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe, (and) exclusively for them (believers) on the Day of Resurrection (the disbelievers will not share them)’” [al-A’raaf 7:32]

The phrase “They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe” indicates that people other than the believers do not have any right to enjoy them. I say that they do not have any shar’i right to them, but the reality of this life is that Allah has created these things and the kaafirs are benefitting from them, and this is something that cannot be denied. This indicates that the kaafir will be brought to account even for the permissible things that he ate and for what he wore. This is based on the texts but it is also the matter of common sense, for how can it make sense that this kaafir who disobeys Allah and does not believe in Him should have the right to enjoy that which Allah has created and blessed His slaves with? If this is clear to you, (then you will see that) the kaafir will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection for his deeds, but the way in which the kaafir will be brought to account will not be like the way in which the believer is brought to

account, because the reckoning of the believer will be easy, and his Lord will speak to him alone, and will make him admit to his sins, then He will say to him, “I concealed your sins in the world and I forgive you for them today.” But as for the kaafir – we seek refuge with Allah – his reckoning will mean that he will confess to his sins and be humiliated before all the people,

“and the witnesses will say, “These are the ones who lied against their Lord!” No doubt! the Curse of Allah is on the Zaalimoon (polytheists, wrongdoers, oppressors)”