164633 - A Jewish person is rejecting what the Qur’an says and claiming that the Jews do not believe that ‘Uzayr is the son of God or that the hand of God is tied up

the question

A Jewish person is asking me about the Qur’an and saying: “We do not believe that ‘Uzayr the Prophet of God is the son of God, and there is no text that says that. We do not say that the hand of God is tied up, and we do not say that we are the sons of God or His loved ones.” And he does not believe in the Qur’an for this reason. I hope that you could please resolve this confusion. He is demanding proofs and says that these are mere fabricated claims against them.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

If that Jewish person were to give a little thought to the matters that he is confused about, he would realise that his problem stems from his arrogance and from his ignorance of his own religion and history, and his ignorance of the laws of God, may He be exalted. If what Allah, may He be exalted, said about his Jewish forefathers was not true, then those forefathers would have been quick to disbelieve the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and to criticise the Qur’an for saying things that were not true about the beliefs and views of his Jewish forefathers. But that did not happen. This is indicative of the ignorance of this objector, and shows that he is simply speaking of something of which he has no knowledge. His forefathers would not have wasted this precious opportunity, if Allah, may He be exalted, had said something about them that was not part of their views and beliefs!

Secondly:

We do not doubt the truth of what Allah, may He be exalted, said about those Jews, for who is truer in speech than Allah? But this confused Jew is ignorant of the fact that in the Arabic language it is possible to attribute a view to a group of people without that necessarily meaning that it was the view of all of them; rather those who held that view may have been some of them, but the view may be attributed to all of them. The wisdom behind that in this case is that the silence of the rest of the group, and the fact that they did not denounce this view, means that they approved of it. In that case, it is valid to attribute it to the entire group.

Thirdly:

With regard to the things that Allah, may He be exalted, mentioned in His Book, about which that Jewish person is confused, Allah, may He be exalted, did not say that they were in the Jewish Scriptures or part of their religion. Rather they were views and opinions that were said at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), or before that, by some group among the Jews, and Allah, may He be exalted, revealed Qur'an that spoke of that and warned them against those evil views of theirs. The fact that this Jewish person does not hold those views does not change the matter in the slightest. They were views that were definitely held, and disavowing them does not mean that they were not held by some people.

1. Their view that al-'Uzayr is the son of God:

This view was narrated from some of the Jews of Madinah, and was narrated from the Isfahani sect of Judaism.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Ibn al-'Arabi said in Sharh at-Tirmidhi:

The Jews of our own time disavowed the idea that al-'Uzayr is the son of God, but this does not necessarily mean that this idea did not exist at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), because that was revealed at his time, when the Jews were with him in Madinah and elsewhere, and there is no report to suggest that any of them rejected that or commented on it. What appears to be the case is that those who held that view were a group among them, not all of them, based on the fact that those among the Christians who said that the

Messiah was the son of God were a group among them, not all of them. So it may be that that group has now become extinct, just as the belief of most of the Jews changed from likening the attributes of Allah to those of human beings to denying His attributes altogether, and the belief of the Christians in the “Son” and the “Father” became symbolic or metaphorical, and not to be taken literally. Glory be to the Controller of the hearts.

End quote from Fath al-Baari (3/359).

Abu Bakr al-Jassaas (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to the words of Allah, may He be exalted (interpretation of the meaning): “And the Jews say: ‘Uzayr (Ezra) is the son of Allah, and the Christians say: Messiah is the son of Allah”[at-Tawbah 9:30], it was said that what is meant is a group among the Jews who believed in that. The evidence for that is the fact that the Jews heard that at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and did not deny it. This is like the view of one who says that “the Khawaarij believe in carrying out massacres and and killing children”, and what he means is a group among them and not all of them. And it is like your saying “Banu Tameem [a tribe] came to me”, and what you mean is some of them. Ibn ‘Abbaas said: That was said by a group among the Jews who came to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said that. They were: Salaam ibn Mashkam, Nu‘maan ibn Awfa, Shaas ibn Qays, and Maalik ibn as-Sayf. So Allah, may He be exalted, revealed this verse. There are none among the Jews who say that now, as far as we know; rather it was a group among them who said that, and they became extinct.

End quote from Ahkaam al-Qur’an (4/299)

Al-Maawardi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If it is said: if that was the view of some of them, why is it attributed to all of them? The answer is: because those who did not hold that view at the time when the Qur’an was revealed did not deny it. Hence it was attributed to all of them, even though only some of them expressed that view.”

End quote from Tafseer al-Maawardi (2/353)

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “And the Jews say: ‘Uzayr (Ezra) is the son of Allah”[at-Tawbah 9:30], did all of them say that or only some of them? And concerning the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), “The Jews will come on the Day of Resurrection and it will be said to them: ‘What did you worship?’ And they will say: ‘ ‘Uzayr’” [agreed upon] – is this applicable to all of them, or not?

He replied:

What is meant by the Jews is a category of people , as in the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “Those (i.e. believers) unto whom the people (hypocrites) said, ‘Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army)’” [Aal ‘Imraan 3:173]. Allah did not say “all the people”, or “all the people have gathered against you”. Rather what is meant here is a category of people. This is like when it is said that such and such a group is doing such and such, or certain people are doing such and such. If some of them hold that view and express it and the rest remain silent and do not object to it, then they all have a share in the sin of that view. And Allah knows best.

End quote from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (15/47)

What we have mentioned here is a principle that will refute the specious argument of that Jewish person. The views that Allah, may He be exalted, narrated that the Jews held are undoubtedly proven from them, and this refers to some of them, not all of them. Attributing a view to a category of people, even though those who hold that view are a group among them, is a usage that is well known in Arabic, and the fact that those views are rejected now does not mean that they were never held in the past. If we stop at this point, we will already have refuted the specious argument, but we will go further and mention the other views and those who held them.

2. Their view that the hand of God is tied up

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “The Jews say: ‘Allah’s Hand is tied up (i.e. He does not give and spend of His Bounty)’” [al-Maa’idah 5:64], ‘Ikrimah said: This was said by Finhaas ibn ‘Azoora and his companions. They had wealth, and when they disbelieved in Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), Finhaas said that to his companions, and they held the view that Allah is a miser and the hand of Allah is tied up and He does not give. So this verse refers specifically to some of them. And it was said that when some people said this, and the others did not denounce it, it became as if they had all said it.

End quote from Tafseer al-Qurtubi (6/238).

Ibn Katheer (may Allah have mercy on him) said: ‘Ikrimah said that it was revealed concerning Finhaas the Jew. It was mentioned above that he is the one who said “ ‘Truly, Allah is poor and we are rich!’” [Aal ‘Imraan 3:181], so Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq (may Allah have mercy on him) hit him.

Muhammad ibn Ishaaq said:

Muhammad ibn Abi Muhammad told me, from Sa‘eed or ‘Ikrimah, from Ibn ‘Abbas who said: A Jewish man called Shaas ibn Qays said: Your Lord is a miser who does not spend. Then Allah revealed the words (interpretation of the meaning): “The Jews say: ‘Allah’s Hand is tied up (i.e. He does not give and spend of His Bounty).’ Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for what they uttered. Nay, both His Hands are widely outstretched. He spends (of His Bounty) as He wills” [al-Maa’idah 5:64].

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, refuted what they said, and criticised them for what they made up and fabricated. He said: “Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for what they uttered”.

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (3/146).

3. Their view that they were the sons of God and His loved ones

This issue may be different from the two issues discussed above, in that it was a view held by

some of the Jews at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), based on their distortion of the Book of their Lord, may He be exalted.

It says in as-Saheeh al-Masboor min at-Tafseer bi'l-Ma'thoor (2/169) by Dr Hikmat ibn Basheer ibn Yaseen (may Allah preserve him):

At-Tabari narrated with a hasan isnaad via Ibn Ishaaq from Ibn 'Abbaas who said: Nu'maan ibn Ada', Bahri ibn 'Amr and Sha's ibn 'Adiyy came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and spoke to him. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) spoke to them, calling them to Allah and warning them of His punishment. They said: Do not try to scare us, O Muhammad, for by Allah we are the sons of Allah and His loved ones! – like what the Christians say. So Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, revealed concerning them the words: "And (both) the Jews and the Christians say: 'We are the children of Allah and His loved ones'…" [al-Maa'idah 5:18]. End quote.

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

Then Allah, may He be exalted, said – refuting the lies and fabrications of the Jews and Christians – (interpretation of the meaning): "And (both) the Jews and the Christians say: 'We are the children of Allah and His loved ones'…" [al-Maa'idah 5:18]. That is, we claim to follow His Prophets, and they are His sons and He takes care of them, and He loves us. They quote from their Scripture that Allah, may He be exalted, said to His slave Israel: "You are My firstborn son." So they interpreted this wrongly and distorted it. But more than one of their wise men who became Muslim refuted them and said: This phrase is used by them by way of honour, as the Christians quote from their book that 'Eesa (Jesus) said to them: "I am going to my Father and your Father" meaning, my Lord and your Lord. It is well-known that they did not claim to be sons of God as they claimed with regard to 'Eesa (peace be upon him); rather what they meant by that was that they were dear to Him and He loved them. Hence they said: We are the sons of God and His loved ones.

End quote from Tafseer Ibn Katheer (3/68, 69)

This is what we have managed to wrote to refute the specious argument of that Jewish person, and

thus it becomes clear that the man is denying something that is well-known in history about what his forefathers said of falsehood. He should understand that it was entirely possible for those forefathers to deny what Allah, may He be exalted, said about them, but because they did not do that, it is known that it was true. May Allah guide him to Islam and open his heart to faith.

And Allah knows best.