34694 - How will the kaafir be brought to account in the Hereafter, when he is not required to adhere to sharee’ah?

the question

How will the kaafir be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection, when he is not required to adhere to sharee’ah?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Shaykh Muhammad ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

This question is based on an incorrect understanding, because the kaafir is subject to the same requirements as the believer, but he is not obliged to follow them in this world. The fact that this is required of him is indicated by the verse in which Allaah says (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 Allaah hated) with vain talkers.

And we used to belie the Day of Recompense’”

[al-Muddaththir 74:39]

If they would not be punished for not praying and not feeding the poor, etc, the verse would not have mentioned these things. This indicates that they will be punished with regard to minor issues of Islam. As this is proven in the texts, it is also indicated by rational thinking, because if Allaah will punish His believing slave for his shortcomings with regard to the obligations of his religion, how can He not then punish the kaafir?

Moreover, the kaafir will be punished for all the blessings that Allaah bestowed upon him of food, drink and other things. Allaah 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 Allaah (by keeping away from His forbidden things), and believe and do righteous good deeds, and again fear Allaah and believe, and once again fear Allaah and do good deeds with Ihsaan (perfection). And Allaah loves the good-doers”

[al-Maa'idah 5:93]

The wording of this verse states that the believers will be spared any blame for what they ate, which implies that the kaafirs will be subjected to blame for what they ate. Similarly Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Say (O Muhammad): ‘Who has forbidden the adornment with clothes given by Allaah, 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 words “They are, in the life of this world, for those who believe” in this verse indicate that non-believers have no right to enjoy them in this world – i.e., they have no rights according to sharee’ah, but according to real life as Allaah has decreed it to be, Allaah has created these blessings and the kaafirs are benefitting from them, and this is something that no one can deny.

This indicates that the kaafir will be brought to account for what he ate of permissible things and what he wore. What is implied by the text is also implied by reason, otherwise how could this kaafir who disobeys Allaah and does not believe in Him deserve to enjoy that which Allaah has created and has bestowed upon His slaves? If this is clear to you then the kaafir will also be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection for his deeds, but the reckoning of the kaafir on the Day of Resurrection will not be like the reckoning of the believer, because the believer's reckoning will be easy; his Lord will address him in secret and will tell him of his sins until he confesses, then He will say to him, "I concealed them for you in the world and I forgive you for them this Day." But for the kaafir – we seek refuge with Allaah – his reckoning will involve his being told of his sins and being disgraced in front of the witnesses:

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

[Hood 11:18 – interpretation of the meaning]