

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

233374 - The wisdom behind Allah, may He be exalted, asking: “Whose is the dominion this Day?”

the question

Allah, may He be Blessed and exalted, will look out at this world and will say: “O dunya [this world], where are your rivers? Where are your trees? Where are your inhabitants? Where are the kings and the sons of kings? Where are the tyrants and the sons of tyrants? Where are those who consumed what I provided and enjoyed the blessings I bestowed, yet worshipped others? Whose is the dominion this Day? No one will answer Him, then Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, will answer Himself and will say: Dominion belongs to Allah, the One, the Subduer!

My question is:

Why will the Lord ask the world these questions when He knows best? Why will He ask if there will be no response from anyone?

Even though everything that Allah wants to speak will speak, why will the world not say that no human is left?

This question has been bothering me for a long time. I hope that you can give me a convincing answer.

Summary of answer

Conclusion:

There is nothing confusing about this question, regardless of who the questioner and responder may be. The purpose behind it is to highlight the greatness of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and to confirm that He alone has dominion and power over all creation. Such ways of expression are well known to the Arabs in their language and in their styles

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of eloquence.

And Allah knows best.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

We have not come across this hadith with the wording mentioned in any of the books of Sunnah that have isnaads (chains of narration). Rather this wording was mentioned by Ibn al-Jawzi in his book *Bustaan al-Waa'izeen* (22), with no isnaad, in the context of preaching.

Reports cannot be accepted from such a book, and no ruling can be derived from its text.

A similar meaning (i.e., the destruction and death of all creatures, even the angels, peace be upon them) is mentioned in a very long report, in a hadith that is well known to the scholars, and is known as the hadith of the Trumpet (hadith as-soor).

This hadith was narrated by Ishaq ibn Raahawayh in his *Musnad* (no. 10, 1/84); Abu'sh-Shaykh in *al-'Azamah* (no. 386, 387, 388); and others.

It is a flawed hadith that is da'eef in all its isnaads. The hadith and its isnaads, along with discussion of who among the leading scholars of hadith classed it as da'eef, has been mentioned in the answer to question no. 105309.

Secondly:

The idea that the questioner found difficult to understand is the idea of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, asking all creatures, after they die. However, there is proof and evidence in the

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Qur'an and Sunnah to support this idea in general terms, regardless of the specific context mentioned in the question.

Allah, may He be exalted, says in His holy Book (interpretation of the meaning):

“(He is Allah) Owner of High Ranks and Degrees, the Owner of the Throne. He sends the Inspiration by His Command to any of His slaves He wills, that he (the person who receives inspiration) may warn (men) of the Day of Mutual Meeting (i.e. The Day of Resurrection).

The Day when they will (all) come out, nothing of them will be hidden from Allah. Whose is the dominion this Day? (Allah Himself will reply to His Question): It is Allah's the One, the Subduer!

This Day shall every person be recompensed for what he earned. No injustice (shall be done to anybody). Truly, Allah is Swift in reckoning”

[Ghaafir 40:15-17].

Al-Bukhaari (4812) and Muslim (2787) narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) say: “Allah will seize the earth and will roll up the heavens in His right hand, then He will say: ‘I am the Sovereign; where are the kings of the earth?’”

Ibn al-Jawzi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to the words of Allah, may He be exalted, “Whose is the dominion this Day?” they are unanimously agreed that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, will say this after the death of all creatures, but they differed as to when He, may He be glorified and exalted, will say it. There are two views:

1. that He will say it when all creatures have died and there is no one left to answer, then He will answer Himself and will say: “It is Allah's the One, the Subduer.” This is the view of the majority

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2. that he will say it on the Day of Resurrection.

With regard to who will answer Him in that case (on the Day of Resurrection), there are two views:

1. that He will answer Himself, for all creatures will have fallen silent and will not answer when He, may He be exalted, says that. This was suggested by Ata'.

2. that all creatures will respond and will say: "It is Allah's the One, the Subduer". This was suggested by Ibn Jurayj.

End quote from Zaad al-Maseer (7/212).

See: Tafseer al-Baghawi (7/143-144); as-Siraaj al-Muneer by al-Khateeb ash-Sharbeeni (3/475); Mahaasin at-Ta'weel by al-Qaasimi (8/305).

Thirdly:

There is nothing confusing about the response to this question, whether it comes from the Lord of the Worlds, Who is the Knower of the unseen, or from others, as has been suggested. This is based on the following:

-1-

It has been suggested that this question and answer will come after the resurrection of all creatures and after they have been gathered to the Lord of the Worlds, and all creatures will answer, as was quoted above from Ibn Jurayj. In that case, there is nothing confusing about it.

This view was narrated from Ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: Allah will gather all creatures on the Day of Resurrection in one plain, in a white land, as if it were a silver ingot, in which Allah is never disobeyed. The first words spoken will be when a caller calls out, Whose is the dominion this Day? And they will all respond: It is Allah's the One, the Subduer.

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This was narrated by Abu'l-Hayyaan in al-Bahr al-Muheet (9/245). A similar report was narrated from Ibn 'Atiyah in al-Muharrar al-Wajeez (4/551). In ad-Durr al-Manthoor (7/280), as-Suyooti attributed it to 'Abd ibn Humayd in his Tafseer.

In that case, the question and response are to be understood as they appear to be, that all creatures will answer the question of their Lord.

-2-

Or we may assume that the response does not come from all creatures; rather the one who asks and the one who responds is the Lord of the Worlds, as was narrated from Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: When all those who are in the heavens and on earth die, there will be none left except Allah. He will say: Whose is the dominion this Day? And no one will answer Him, so He will answer Himself and say: It is Allah's the One, the Subduer.

See: al-Bahr al-Muheet, ibid.

There is nothing confusing about this either, because the aim of a rhetorical question is not to find out about something that is not known to the questioner. We see this in as-Saheehayn, in the hadith of Abu Hurayrah, according to which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The angels of the night and the day come to you in succession, and they meet at Fajr prayer and at 'Asr prayer, then those who stayed among you ascend and their Lord asks them, although He knows best about them, 'How did you leave My slaves?' and they say, 'We left them when they were praying and we came to them when they were praying.'"

The aim of the question here is not to find out about how people are doing, because that is already known to Him, as it says in the hadith itself: "Although He knows best about them". Rather the wisdom behind it is to highlight the honourable status of such people, and demonstrate their virtue to the angels.

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One of the purposes of asking this question may be the opposite of that, as the questioner knows for certain that the one who is asked will not answer. This is like the report in Saheeh Muslim (2873) from the hadith of 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) showed us, one day before, where the people of Badr would fall. He said: "This is the place where So and so will fall tomorrow, if Allah wills." 'Umar said: By the One in Whose hand is my soul, they did not miss the places that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had pointed out. They were put in a well on top of one another, then the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) went to them and said: "O So and so son of So and so, and O So and so son of So and so, have you found what Allah and His Messenger promised to be true? For I have found what my Lord promised me to be true." 'Umar said: O Messenger of Allah, how can you speak to bodies in which there are no souls? He said: "You do not hear what I am saying more clearly than they do, but they cannot give me any reply."

In Saheeh al-Bukhaari (3976) Qataadah said: Allah brought them back to life so that He caused them to hear his words by way of rebuke, humiliation and wreaking vengeance, and so as to make them feel sorrow and regret.

Qataadah (may Allah have mercy on him) highlighted the purpose behind such questioning, and how the disbelievers were made to hear these words. There is nothing in that to suggest that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) really wanted to know how they were faring or that he wanted them to tell him something of which he was unaware.

This is something very common in the language and poetry of the Arabs. The poet stands at the traces of encampments and places where his loved one halted, or he speaks to his camel, or he goes to the graves and calls out, asking their occupants questions, and the like. This is something common and well-known, and no one will find it strange who has the slightest knowledge of the language and poetry of the Arabs.

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Having said that, we may note the following:

There is nothing in the apparent meaning of the wording, or in its implicit meaning, to suggest that Allah wants the creatures to speak and give an answer to His question, or that He is asking them to utter anything at all. Rather the context is that of manifesting His glory and majesty, and highlighting that whoever used to compete with Him in His dominion in this world, through his words, claims and lies, will have no control - on that difficult Day - over any of his own affairs, and will not have the power even to simply make a statement or verbal claim; he will not dare to initiate any word or deed before the Lord of the Worlds. Shaykh al-'Allaamah at-Taahir ibn 'Aashoor (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Asking this question is done either to confirm an idea, so that the tyrants among those who are gathered on the Day of Resurrection will testify against themselves and acknowledge that they were wrong in what they claimed in this world for themselves of the dominion of their idols, when they attributed to their idols dominion and control in various regions of the earth and the heavens, such as the beliefs of the ancient Greeks in a god of the sea, a god of war and a god of wisdom; or the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians in a god of the sun, a god of death and a god of wisdom; or the beliefs of the ancient Arabs that some idols belonged to certain tribes, such as al-Laat which belonged to Thaqeef, al-Khalasah which belonged to Daws, and Manaat which belonged to al-Aws and al-Khazraj.

The same applies to what they claimed for themselves of power over people that no one else shared with them, such as when Pharaoh said: "I know not that you have an ilah (a god) other than me" [al-Qasas 28:38] and "Is not mine the dominion of Egypt, and these rivers flowing underneath me" [az-Zukhruf 43:51]. Another example is when the kings of Persia gave themselves the title King of Kings (Shahin Shah), and the kings of India gave themselves the title King of the World (Shah Jahan).

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This may be further clarified in the hadith that describes the Day of Gathering: “Then Allah will say: ‘I am the Sovereign; where are the kings of the earth?’” The purpose of this question is to scare them away from showing themselves on that Day. In other words: Where are they this Day? Why do they not show their greatness and pride?

It may also be that this question is a way to make people long for what should follow it of an answer, because usually the one who hears a question looks forward to hearing the answer. Thus the answer sinks in more effectively when he hears it.

It may be that the phrase “It is Allah’s the One, the Subduer” is the completion of the sentence that was uttered by Allah, may He be exalted, so He asks the question and gives the answer.

That is because if the question was asked in order to establish an idea or to make people long for the answer, then usually the one who utters the question is the one who takes care of answering it. We see something similar in the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “What are they asking (one another)? About the great news, (i.e. Islamic Monotheism, the Quran, which Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) brought and the Day of Resurrection, etc.)” [an-Naba’ 78:1-2].

Or it may be that the answer will be the statement of someone else who is not identified in the verse, i.e., those who are questioned will say “It is Allah’s the One, the Subduer”, affirming that. What this means is that those who come out will say: “It is Allah’s the One, the Subduer”.

These two divine attributes (the One, the Subduer) are mentioned – and not other sublime attributes– because their meanings are more appropriate to the question: “Whose is the sovereignty this Day?”, as the signs of His Oneness and His subduing of all tyrants will be made manifest.

End quote from at-Tahreer wa’t-Tanweer (24/110-111).