

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ أَدَمَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيَرْضَى بِأَنْ يُصَلَّى عَلَيْهِ

In The Name Of Allah The Most Compassionate Very Merciful
All Praise Due To Allah And Peace And Blessings Be Upon His Beloved Messenger

Scholarly opinions on the five special categories of Ilme Ghaib (knowledge of the unseen)

Opinions of Ulama on the issue of the five special categories of Ilme Ghaib
(knowledge of the unseen)

In this specific hadith shareef, the question of when the day of Judgement will occur was also asked and the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him clearly mentioned that the one been asked knows as much as the one asking the question. In other words, the one been asked does not know more than the one asking the question.

When will the day of Judgement appear, when will rain occur, what is inside the womb of a mother, what will a person do tomorrow and which person will die where tomorrow, this is that five special category of unseen knowledge which is specific to the Divine Being of the Almighty.

The debate is on whether He has also blessed anyone else with this knowledge? There are some people who have mentioned in their state of ignorance that this

knowledge has never been given to anyone and no creation is aware of any of these things. While the majority of the Ulama have declared that this knowledge has also been given to the Prophets especially the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him. We will present the statements of those Ulama who have clearly mentioned that these branches of the Unseen have certainly been given to the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him.

Allamah Badrudeen Aini writes that, "Allamah Qurtabi has stated that if "Any person who claims to know any of these five branches of knowledge without the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him being a source of this knowledge (of theirs), that person is a liar in his claim."

Allamah ibn Hajr Asqalani, Allamah Ahmed Qastalani, Mullah Ali Qari, and Shaikh Uthmani in their own commentaries have also mentioned the statement of Allamah Qurtabi.

Allamah ibn Hajr Asqalani writes that, "Certain Ulama have given the opinion that in Surah Bani Israeel, there is no proof that the Almighty has not revealed the knowledge of the true essence of the soul to the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him. In fact, there is a great possibility that he was informed about this. However, he was also commanded not to reveal this to anyone. The Ulama have also mentioned the same thing about the knowledge of the day of Judgement".

Allamah Ahmed Qastalani has mentioned the following words, "The knowledge of the day of Judgement and those five branches of knowledge which are mentioned in Surah Luqman in the last verse, the Ulama have mentioned that the knowledge of these five things have been given to him and he was also commanded to keep them secret."

Allamah Jalaaludeen Suyutwi writes, "Certain Ulama have mentioned that the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him has been given the knowledge of these five branches. He has also been given the knowledge of when the day of Judgement will occur and also the knowledge of the soul and that he has also been commanded to keep this secret".

Allamah Saawi Maliki writes, "The Ulama have declared that the truth is this that he did not pass away from this world until the Almighty did not reveal the knowledge of these five things to him. However, he was also commanded to keep them secret."

Allama Alusi writes, "The Holy Prophet Peace be upon him did not pass away until that time that the Almighty had revealed to him the knowledge of all those things which it was possible to reveal."

He again writes, "It is also permissible that the Almighty had revealed to the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him every aspect and also when the day of Judgement will occur. However, not in the sense that there would be similarity or confusion with this knowledge and the knowledge of the Almighty. The Almighty has also; based on Divine Wisdom made it necessary upon him, (the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him) not to reveal this. This is also among the special knowledge possessed by the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him.

Imam Razi writes, "The Almighty is Aalimul Ghaib. He does not reveal this special knowledge such as when the day of Judgement will occur to anyone. However, He does reveal this to those whom He is pleased with and (obviously that can only be) His Prophet."

Allamah Alawudeen Khazin has also recorded the same explanation.

Allamah Taftazaani writes, "The meaning of Ghaib or Unseen in this context does not mean unseen in a common context but it signifies unseen in a confined context or it can also signify unseen in a special context. In other words such things as the appearance of the day of Judgement and this is also understood from the subject of this verse. And this is also not impossible that the Almighty would reveal the actual time of Qiyamah to any of His Messengers whether they are Angels or human.

Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dehlwi writes that, "There is no Quranic verse which proves that the Almighty had not given the Prophet Peace be upon him

knowledge of the true essence of the soul. In fact, it is permissible to admit that He did in fact give him this knowledge. (Perhaps) He also instructed him not to reveal this to people. There are also certain Ulama who mention the same thing about the day of Judgement. However, this servant admits and asks, how can any true believer negate that the Holy Prophet has knowledge of the soul?

He is indeed Sayyidul Mursaleen and Imaamul Aarifeen. He is that person to whom the Almighty has revealed His Divine Being, His Divine Attributes and has blessed him with all past and present knowledge. What is the knowledge of the soul compared to this (knowledge of his?). As a matter of fact, the knowledge of the true essence of the soul compared to his knowledge in reality is nothing but like a small droplet".

Syed Abdul Aziz Dabbaagh who is considered as a Kaamil Aarif writes that, "How can these five branches of knowledge remain hidden from the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him when in reality, any person from his Ummah can never be a true and elevated saint, (Saahib-e-Tasarruf) until and unless he is not aware of these five (branches of knowledge)?"

The reason that these five branches of unseen knowledge have been strictly associated with the Almighty!

In Surah Luqman, verse 34, the Quran declares that:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَاعِلْمِ السَّاعَةِ ۚ وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ ط وَمَاتَدْرِى

نَفْسٌ مَّاذَاتُكْسِبُ غَدًا ط وَمَاتَدْرِى نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ

خَبِيرٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

Undoubtedly, with Allah is the knowledge of the Hour, and He sends down rain and knows what is in the wombs of the mothers and no soul knows what it

will earn tomorrow and no soul knows in what land it will die. Undoubtedly,
Allah is the Knower, All Aware.

This verse clearly proves that the knowledge of these five things strictly belong to the Divine Knowledge of the Almighty. The question which arises is that all Knowledge belongs to the Almighty, why specifically these five branches of knowledge?

There are two answers to this question. The first is that the mushriks used to always question about these things and therefore, it has been clearly mentioned that this knowledge belongs to Allah Almighty. The second answer is that these same mushriks also believed that these things could be revealed by their fortune tellers and astronomers and hence, in this verse, this has been clearly refuted and they are clearly informed that these branches of knowledge belongs to Allah Almighty specifically.

This is also something that people do not seem to understand that if something belongs to you, it means you have the right to give it to someone. After all, it is your property and you are at liberty to give it to anyone you please. In like manner, this five branches of knowledge belongs to the Almighty and if He wishes to give this to His special servants, how can you object to this? How can you even object as to what He does with His own Knowledge? As a matter of fact, even those who object belong to Him! It is therefore no wonder that when he places them in Hell for their erroneous beliefs, they will finally understand that He can do whatever He wishes with what belongs to Him.

People in those days also used to continuously question the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him about these five things. There was a village person named Haarith bin Umar who once appeared in front of the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him and presented the following questions, "When will the day of Judgement occur. Our land is now dry, I wish to plant seeds when will the rain come. My wife is also pregnant, will it be a boy or girl. I am aware of what transpired yesterday, however, what will I do tomorrow. I have knowledge of where I was born, where and when will I die etc." It is at that moment that this verse in Surah Luqman was revealed.

The people in the days of ignorance also had the habit of visiting their astrologers and fortune tellers and they firmly believed that these people had knowledge of these things. At the same time, we must understand that if someone visits a fortune teller, and even believes in this, he is indeed a Kaafir! The Holy Prophet Peace be upon him has stated that, "Whosoever goes to a fortune teller and believes in his word, then he has indeed committed Kufr in the religion which was revealed to Mohammed".

As for those reports in which certain Prophets and even saints are able to reveal the unseen, this is because they have been inspired with either Divine revelation in the form of Wahi or Ilham which is Divinely inspired knowledge. Hence, even though these five branches of knowledge belongs to the Almighty, it does not mean that at times, the Prophets and saints have not revealed certain aspects of this knowledge of the unseen.

As we have already said, it belongs to Allah Almighty and He can bestow it upon whomsoever He wishes. It does not belong to us, hence we have no right to claim ownership as to whom it should be revealed to. In surah Jinn, verses 26, 27 the Quran declares that:

عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾

The Knower of Unseen reveals not His secret to anyone.

إِلَّا مَن ارْتَضَىٰ مِن رَّسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِن بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

Except to His chosen Messenger and appoints guard before them and behind them.

At the same time, there is also unique Divine knowledge of the Unseen which He reveals to no one and is specific to Himself. This is revealed in Surah An'am, verse 59:

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ

And with Him is the key of the unseen, He only knows them.

The knowledge of Qiyamah is also from among those signs and this has been kept secret. However, the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him did reveal certain signs about its impending arrival such as the appearance of Dajjal, the arrival of Nabi Esa *Peace be upon him*, the sun rising from the West etc.

In like manner, certain eminent saints have also predicated the coming of rain which was revealed by them through inspired knowledge and some have even revealed whether the child would be a female or male. In like manner, once Abul Azam Isfahani became ill in Shiraz and he mentioned to those around him that he had made Dua to Allah Almighty that he pass away in Tartus.

He also mentioned that if he dies in Shiraz, then he should be buried in a non Muslim graveyard. In other words, he had absolute certainty that he would pass away in Tartus. A few days later he recovered from his illness and was eventually buried in Tartus! In the same way, my Shaikh also predicated the moment of his death nearly twenty years earlier and he passed away exactly the same time which he had foretold. (1)

(1). Allamah Ismail Haqqi Hanafi - passed away 1137. Ruhul Bayan, pages 103/105 vol. 7)

The reasons that the Holy Prophet – may Allah send peace and blessings upon him – revealed the signs and not the actual date

In this hadith shareef, the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him revealed the signs of Qiyamah and not the actual date. One of the signs will be that the female will give birth to her master. You will also see a people who were once bare foot, naked and poor build large structures. There is no doubt that the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him knew the exact date of Qiyamah, but he was commanded not to reveal this to ordinary people.

This is the reason when the question was asked about when the day of Judgement would occur, the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him did not say that he did not know about its exact moment. As a matter of fact, he merely moved away from the topic and began to reveal the signs of Qiyamah.

There are many explanations about a female giving birth to her master. But the closet is that near the day of judgement, children would completely disobey their parents. They would be rude and abrupt and would actually instruct their mothers what to do and what command to obey. In this manner, the mothers would appear as if they are actually slaves of these children!

The Holy Prophet Peace be upon him merely revealed two signs. One is the state of a female and the other about those who were once poor and large structures that will be built by them. There are many other ahadith where the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him revealed many other signs such as the Yajuj and Majuj, Daabatul Ard, Nabi Esa *Peace be upon him*, Imam Mehdi May Allah have mercy on him, the fact that women would wear revealing clothing, incompetent people would become leaders and rulers.

At the same time, he also revealed certain key time factors such as that it will occur on Friday and it will be the 10th of Muharram. The only thing not revealed was the actual year. If this was revealed then every child would know by now when it would actually occur. However, we see that the Quran clearly states that it would appear suddenly.

In Surah Al Araf, verse 187, the Quran declares that:

"it shall not come upon you but suddenly".

If the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him had revealed the actual date, it would not remain a sudden event and would therefore disprove the Quran which is impossible. At the same time, the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him was sent to prove the Quran and not to disprove it. Hence, as per Divine Instruction, he did not reveal the actual date but merely informed us about the signs and even the day on which it will occur and nothing else. And certainly not the actual date.

In the Jamia of Tirmidi and the Sunan of Abu Daud, it is mentioned that only after three days, the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him revealed to Hadrat Sayyiduna Umar May Allah have mercy on him who this stranger was who had appeared. In the hadith narrated by Hadrat Sayyiduna Abu Hurayrah May Allah

have mercy on him which is the fifth and sixth hadith, the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him actually instructed the Ashaab to go and call this stranger.

However, we all know that they could not find him. Only then, did the Holy Prophet Peace be upon him reveal to them that this was Jibrael Ameen. Allamah Nawawi May Allah have mercy on him explains that perhaps the reason that this was only revealed three days later to Hadrat Sayyiduna Umar May Allah have mercy on him was perhaps he had left after this and had only appeared three days later. Also perhaps after he had inquired, then only was he informed about the true identity of this person. (۱)

(۱). Allamah Yahya bin Sharf Nawawi Shafi - Sharah Muslim. Page ۲۸, vol.۱

(Extracted from the commentary of Sahih Muslim)