



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE PHRASE YAS'ALUNAKA 'THEY ASK YOU' AND ITS RESPONSES IN SURAH AL-BAQARAH – AN OBJECTIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Questioning is a linguistic method with significant importance in clarifying ideas and conveying concepts. When Allah mentions something in the Quran, it aims to establish a specific principle and guide humanity in using this method correctly. Conversely, some questions and inquiries are prohibited, as the limited human intellect cannot delve into them or express opinions or thoughts. This is exemplified in Allah's disapproval of the Prophet's questioning about things that have not occurred. Excessive questioning is identified as a cause of destruction for individuals. The companions themselves discouraged frequent questioning of the Prophet, raising questions about the numerous questions and interrogations in Surah Al-Baqarah. This study explores the connection between these questions, the themes of the Surah, and the prohibited inquiries. The misconception that the companions did not ask about matters that occurred to them or excessively questioned the Prophet is addressed, emphasizing the need for a scientific approach to understand the types of questioners, the nature of the questions, and the society in which they were asked. The phrase "They ask you" appears thirteen times in the Quran, five of which are in Surah Al-Baqarah, covering various topics related to daily life.

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Introduction:-

The Quran is the source and origin of sciences, with its rays encompassing the vast field of knowledge. It was revealed by the Almighty as a miraculous guidance for all of humanity, containing comprehensive knowledge expressed with eloquence and rhetorical brilliance that captivates minds and captivates hearts. Its miraculous composition, understood only by the Knower of the Unseen, serves as a guide and a clear path for righteous conduct. Observing the noble companions, may Allah be pleased with them, one finds that they eagerly sought to understand the intentions of Allah within its verses. A man among them would approach the Prophet, peace be upon him, with questions not motivated by the obstinacy seen in the queries of the Children of Israel, but rather as inquiries driven by a genuine desire for goodness and seeking knowledge.

For knowledge, there are means, with questioning being one of the most crucial. Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him, expressed this idea, saying, "The increase in knowledge comes through seeking, and the

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attainment of knowledge comes through questioning" (Ibn Abdul Barr, 2000, 1/374). It is from this standpoint that the researcher is motivated to delve into this subject.

This research will consist of two sections, outlined as follows:

First Topic: Linguistic Definition

Linguistically:

The term "سؤال" (question) linguistically refers to what is asked of a student to answer in an examination, encompassing questions in plural form. The root of the word is associated with the act of asking, and a question signifies an inquiry. In the reverse context, a question is defined as an interrogative sentence that requires a response from the addressee (Al-Askari, 1992).

In Technical Terms:

In technical terms, linguists understand a question as a demand, while educators interpret it as the subject. In Jumil Saliba's philosophical lexicon, a question is linked to the summoning of knowledge (3102) Elharar Academic Success. The Answer: In technical terminology, various aspects of the word "إجابة" (answer) are understood as derivatives of the verb "أجاب" (answered), such as "أجاب على" (answered on), "أجاب عن" (answered to). An answer to a question is defined as a fulfillment of the request (Omar, 2008, 1/416).

Second Topic: Quranic Verses and Contexts

First Subtopic: Introduction

A contemplation of the Quranic questions and answers within Surah Al-Baqarah reveals numerous profound benefits in the method of questioning and answering, making it critically important to extract lessons from them. The utilization of responses is contingent upon the inquirer's circumstances and the nature of the inquiry. Surah Al-Baqarah encompasses within its verses six instances of explicit questions posed to the Prophet (peace be upon him), and the answers to these questions were provided by the Lord of the Worlds. We will enumerate these questions in this blessed paper, with the permission of the Almighty.

Second Subtopic: Quranic Passages

First verse:

(فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الَّتِي تُفَصِّلُ صَلَاحَ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَمَّا غَشَوْا فَكُلُوا مِمَّا قَدْ بَلَغَ إِلَيْكُمْ ذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَكْفِيكُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ عَلِيمُونَ) [Al-Baqarah: 220]

Allah's Statement:

{They ask you about the crescent moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj." It is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed.} [Al-Baqarah: 198]. Reason for Revelation: Al-Shawkani, may Allah have mercy on him, mentioned that the reason for the revelation of this verse, according to Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them both, was in response to a question posed by Ma'adh ibn Jabal and Tha'labah ibn Uthman, two Ansari men. They said, "O Messenger of Allah, what is the matter with the crescent moon, as it appears thin like a thread, then increases until it becomes large and equal, then it decreases and becomes thin again until it returns to its initial state? Why does it not remain in one state?" In response to this, the verse {They ask you about the crescent moons...} was revealed (Al-Shawkani, Fath al-Qadeer, 1/281). This verse is the opening of the series of questions in the Quran, and a question, as Ibn Ashur mentioned, is when someone asks for something or seeks information. If the request is for giving something, it is a direct request. If it is for information, the verb is followed by "عن" (about) or its equivalent. (Ibn Ashur, Al-Tahrir wal-Tanwir, 1984 CE, 2/194). This Surah includes several verses starting with "يسألونك" (They ask you), and seven of them are relatively close to each other. Some are not connected by a coordinating conjunction, consisting of four, while others are connected. The last three are connected, and they can be understood by examining their contexts.

The wise method is to answer the question differently than what was asked, redirecting the questioner to what is beneficial and worthy of inquiry. If the question is about wisdom, this is a wise approach. If the question is about a cause or rationale, this approach is also wise. The verse {They ask you about the crescent moons...} is not a direct answer to the inquirers' exact question. Allah commanded the Prophet to respond by saying: {Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for Hajj."} This response aligns with the nature of the inquiry, whether they were asking about the wisdom behind the phases of the moon or the cause and rationale. This wise approach

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It is narrated from Az-Zuhri that he said: Urwah bin Az-Zubair informed me that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent a military expedition and appointed 'Abdullah bin Jahsh Asadi as its commander. They were given the option to attack the caravan of the Quraish, and if anyone had any doubt about their intention, they could leave them. They set out and when they reached a place called Nakhlah, which is not far from the sacred territory, the idolaters of the Quraish passed by them. Some of them said: We cannot kill them when we are in the sacred month, while others said: If they kill you, we will help you. When the two groups disagreed, fighting occurred between them, and some of them were killed, while others were taken captive. When the news reached the Prophet (ﷺ), he did not disapprove of their taking captives and killing them in the sacred month, but said: "The actions of the Quraish have made it permissible for you to shed their blood and take their properties." (Al-Wahidi, 1992 CE, p. 188)

The majority of scholars agree that the prohibition of fighting in the sacred months has been abrogated by the command to fight the polytheists wherever they are found. Some interpreters argue that it is not abrogated, as the general prohibition remains applicable. They explain that the specific context of this verse regarding the Battle of Nakhlah does not negate the general command to fight. Moreover, the sanctity of the sacred months, especially the prohibition of fighting, is one of their significant virtues. The verse emphasizes that the transgressions committed by the disbelievers, such as preventing access to Al-Masjid Al-Haram and expelling its people, are even graver than killing during these months.

This verse was revealed due to the incident involving the expedition led by Abdullah bin Jahsh, where they encountered the Quraish caravan near the sacred territory during the sacred month of Rajab. The disbelievers accused the Muslims of violating the sanctity of the sacred months, and this verse was revealed in response to their objections. The verse underscores the severity of the polytheists' actions and their relentless hostility towards the believers, highlighting that they will persist in fighting until they manage to turn the believers away from their religion.

The verse also warns about the consequences of apostasy, stating that if someone turns away from their religion and dies in a state of disbelief, their deeds will be in vain in both this world and the Hereafter, and they will be among the inhabitants of the Fire, where they will abide eternally. This emphasizes the gravity of abandoning one's faith and the importance of remaining steadfast in the face of trials and opposition. (As-Saadi, 2000 CE, p. 97)

I hope this provides a clear understanding of the third passage.

Fourth verse:

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْغَفْوُ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ﴾ [البقرة: 219]

Allah's Statement: {They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, 'In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit.' And they ask you what they should spend. Say, 'The excess [beyond needs].' Thus Allah makes clear to you the verses [of revelation] that you might give thought.} [Al-Baqarah: 219]

Reason for Revelation:

This verse was revealed during the time of Umar bin Al-Khattab, Mu'adh bin Jabal, and a group of Ansar who came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and asked him about the ruling on wine and gambling, considering them beneficial for the mind and a means of gaining wealth. In response to their inquiry, Allah revealed this verse. (Al-Wahidi, 1992 CE, p. 71)

Explanation:

The believers asked the Messenger (ﷺ) about the rulings on wine and gambling, as these were prevalent practices during the pre-Islamic era and even in the early days of Islam. There seemed to be confusion or doubt regarding their legal status, so Allah commanded the Prophet (ﷺ) to clarify their harms and benefits, setting the stage for the subsequent prohibition.

Allah informed that the sin and harms associated with wine and gambling, such as the impairment of intellect, financial losses, distraction from the remembrance of Allah, hindrance from prayer, and the development of enmity and hatred, are greater than the perceived benefits derived from earning wealth through trade involving these substances. This clear exposition aimed to discourage the believers from engaging in these practices.

Allah commands believers to avoid intimate contact with their wives during this period, specifically in the area of the genitals. This prohibition signifies that other forms of physical contact are allowed. However, Allah emphasizes the importance of avoiding intimate proximity in the region between the navel and the knee.

The verse specifies the period of avoidance, which is until the cessation of menstrual bleeding. Once they have purified themselves through bathing, then intimate relations are permissible. This verse emphasizes the obligation of ritual bathing (ghusl) for women at the end of their menstruation.

Allah, in His mercy, guides His servants away from harm and safeguards them. The command is lifted when the cause of the prohibition (menstrual bleeding) ceases. The verse concludes by stating that Allah loves those who constantly repent from sins and those who maintain physical and moral purity.

Conclusion:-

In the conclusion, the researcher reached the following points:

1. The phrase "They ask you" appeared in six instances in the Quran, addressing various topics such as determining months, menstruation, intoxicants and gambling, orphans, and the sacred month.
2. Responses were not always direct; at times, they directed the questioners to consider other important matters, as seen in the response to the question about determining months.
3. It was emphasized that the inquiries were not always specific to Muslims, as some instances addressed issues related to non-Muslims, such as the verses about fighting during the sacred month.
4. The study of the phrase "They ask you" in Surah Al-Baqarah provides new insights into how Islam addresses the inquiries of believers, offering precise guidance for daily life and religious rituals.

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