

## ANSWER

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنْ أَشْيَاءٍ إِن تُبَدَّ لَكُمْ تَسْأَلُونَ وَإِن تُسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلُ الْقُرْءَانُ تُبَدَّ لَكُمْ عَفَا  
 اللَّهُ عَنْهَا وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

*O those who believe, do not ask about things which, if disclosed, may displease you; and if you ask about them when the Qur'an is being revealed, they will be disclosed to you. Allah has pardoned you for it. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Forbearing [5:101]*

## COMMENTARY

### The Prohibition of Asking Unnecessary Questions

These verses warn people who keep investigating unnecessarily into Divine injunctions. So fond and bent are they in this exercise that they would go to the outer limit of asking questions even about injunctions which have not been prescribed at all and for which there is really no genuine need that they be asked. In this verse, such people have been instructed not to ask questions lest they are subjected to some trial, or they have to face disgrace as a result of the disclosure of their secrets.

### The Background of the Revelation

As narrated in Sahih Muslim, the background or the cause of the revelation of these verses is as follows. When the verse concerning the obligation of Hajj was revealed, Sayyidnā Al-Aqra' ibn Hābis *radi'allāhu 'anhu* asked: 'Have we been obligated with Hajj every year?' The Holy Prophet ﷺ did not answer that question. He asked again. The Holy Prophet ﷺ still remained silent. When he asked a third time, the Holy Prophet ﷺ reprimanded him by saying: If, in answer to your question, I had said, 'Yes, the Hajj is obligatory every year' - so it would have become, and you would have been unable to do it. After that, he added: Things about which I give you no command, leave them as they are. Do not ask questions by digging and prying into them. Communities before you have been damned eternally through this very proliferation of questioning because they, questions after questions about what Allah and His Messenger did not make obligatory on them, and in consequence of their unnecessary enquiry, these optional things were made obligatory - and then, they got involved in the unfortunate practice of disobeying these. Your established routine should be: Do what I order you to do, with the best of your ability, and leave what I order you not to do (that is, do not dig and pry into things about which no injunctions are given).

### There is No Nubuwwah (Prophethood) and Wahy (Revelation) after the Holy Prophet ﷺ

It has also been tacitly said in this verse: and if you ask about them while the Qur'an is being revealed, they will be disclosed to you (through revelation). Here, by restricting it with the time duration of the revelation of the Qur'an, the indication given is that it will be after the completion of the revelation of the Qur'an, that the process of Prophethood (*Nubuwwah*) and Revelation (*Wahy*) will be discontinued.



Though, after the discontinuation of this process of Prophethood and Revelation, the consequences that new injunctions may come, things not obligatory may become obligatory or someone's secret may be disclosed through revelation are not likely to take effect - but, minting unnecessary questions, falling for investigations into them or asking about things for which there is no need, shall still remain prohibited, even after the discontinuation of the process of Prophethood. The reason is simple. This is a waste of time - your own and that of others.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: *One of the qualities making someone a good Muslim is that one leaves what is unnecessary.*

This tells us that many of our brother Muslims who keep investigating into unnecessary subjects, such as, the name of the mother of Sayyidnā Mūsā 'alayhis salām, or the precise length and breadth of the Ark of Sayyidnā Nūh 'alayhis salām, indulge in what has no effect on one's conduct in life. Therefore, asking such questions is blameworthy - specially when it is already known that people who tend to ask such questions are mostly unaware of the basics of their religion. The problem is that falling for what is wasteful invariably results in making one stay deprived of doing what is necessary. As for the large body of work left by Muslim jurists in which they have answered assumed religious problems and questions, it was not something unnecessary. Later events proved that they were needed by future generations. Therefore, they do not fall under the purview of wasteful or meaningless questions. It is also a part of Islamic teachings that one should not indulge in any activity, whether intellectual or practical, a task or a conversation, and waste precious time through it, unless there is some gain to be made from it in terms of the worldly or other-worldly life.

