

Friday Khutbah 22/11/2013

Tawheed: The Answer of the Question: Where is Allah?

I spoke in my last *Khutbah* about the position of *Tawheed* in the *Deen* of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) and that it is the foundation of the *Deen* and the core of the message of all the messengers of Allah - as Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) says: "We did not send any messenger before you but We revealed to him: There is no god but I, so worship Me."

Tawheed is the first and greatest of the five pillars of Islam and the rest of the pillars; the prayer, Zakat, fasting and hajj, are means to realise it. Despite this fact we find that the majority of Muslims do not have concern for *Tawheed* as they would have concern for the rest of the pillars of Islam. You would find them asking about the details of *Salat*, Zakat, fasting and Hajj but not so much about *Tawheed* and its pillars.

I mentioned that, according to the *Ulama*, there are the three categories of *Tawheed*; *Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyyah* (or lordship i.e. Allah is the creator, provider, etc.), *Tawheed al-Uloohiyyah* (or worship) and *Tawheed al-Asma` was-Sifaat* (the names and attributes of Allah.)

I spoke in some details about the third type of *Tawheed* i.e. *Tawheed al-Asma` was-Sifaat* (the names and attributes of Allah) and explained what is required from a Muslim with regard to this *Tawheed*, which is:

- i) To affirm all the names which Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) has named Himself with and all the attributes which He has ascribed for Himself and also to affirm the names and qualities which His Messenger ﷺ had attributed to Him in the *Hadiths*. One must affirm these names and attributes without interpreting them in a way that changes or denies them.
- ii) Firmly believe that Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) has all the qualities of perfections and is free from all defects and shortcomings.
- iii) Believe that Allah is incomparable to His creation and His attributes do not resemble those of the created things in any way as He says (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*): "There is nothing like unto Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer." - Ash-Shura (42):11

I delayed talking in details about a final issue which is related to this subject – which is the answer of the question: Where is Allah?

This is an issue with regard to it many sections of this *Ummah* had gone astray. We find today many good practising Muslims, yet they make a serious mistake by saying (or repeating) that: Allah is everywhere!

The Qur'an and Sunnah have explicitly stated the elevation (rise) of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) with His Being over His creation using different expressions:

- i) Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*): "They (the living things in heaven and on earth and the angels) fear their Lord above them and do as they are commanded." ((an-Nahl 50.)

- ii) The Qur'an states that things ascend to Him and descend from Him. Ascending is always from downward to upward and descending from above to below. The Qur'an says: "To Him ascend the goodly words and the righteous deed does He exalt." The Qur'an also says: "The angels and the Rûh (Jibril) ascend to Him in a Day the length of which is fifty thousand years. In the *Hadith* the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said: "Our Lord descends to the lower heaven in the last third of the night and says: Who supplicates me....."
- iii) The Qur'an states that Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) is in heaven. He says (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*): "Or do you feel secure that He, Who is in heaven, will not send against you a violent whirl wind"
- iv) The Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) approved the saying of the slave girl who said: Allah is in heaven – when he asked her: Where is Allah? She answered: "He is in heaven." He said: Free her, she is a believer."

These evidences from the Qur'an and *Sunnah* clearly indicate the elevation (rise) of Allah above His creation. *As-Salaf as-Salih*, may Allah be pleased with them, were in agreement over this issue. They affirmed the elevation of Allah with His Being as they affirmed and were in full agreement over His moral elevation as He (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) says: "Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High."

In addition to the evidences of the Qur'an and *Sunnah* and the consensus of *as-Salaf as-Salih*, there is also the evidence of the human nature. Anyone who calls upon Allah or supplicates Him, his heart by nature turns upward and he raises his hands towards heaven.

Imam Ahmed, may Allah have mercy upon him, produced a very strong logical arguments in his reply to the arguments of the heretics and *al-Jahmiyyah*. He said: He who disagrees with us acknowledges that Allah was in existence before space (place), and that He afterwards created space. Accordingly, he can only maintain one of three opinions:

- 1) Allah created space within Himself, and so He is everywhere. This is *Kufr* because it means that He inserted *Jinn*, the beasts and the dirt in Himself.
- 2) Or he says that He created space outside of himself and then entered into it, and therefore He is everywhere. This is also *Kufr* because it means that Allah entered into every dirty and defile place and into the bodies of humans and *Jinn*.
- 3) Or he says that He created space outside of Him and He did not enter into it but arose above it, and so He is above all His creation; the earth, heaven, *Kursi*, Throne and the rest of things. This is the truth which is also supported by the texts of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

This is indeed a very strong argument. With the evidence from the Qur'an and *Sunnah* and with this argument there is no room for anyone to say that Allah is everywhere but to affirm the truth.

Some of the Imams are of the opinion that saying Allah with His Being is with us everywhere is open *Kufr*. Imam *Ibn Khuzaymah* said: “Whoever does not say that Allah is on His Throne above His heavens, separate from His creation, should be asked to repent, if he repents it is all right otherwise he should be killed.”

Imam Al-Baqillani said: “If He were to be everywhere then this means that He would be in the belly of man, in his mouth and other places which one cannot say. It would also mean that He would increase with the increase of the new places which He creates and He decrease with the decrease of the places which cease to exist.”

In summary, it is an obligation upon every Muslim to believe in the elevation of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) above His creation and that He arose over the Throne, over the seventh heaven. The Qur'an and Sunnah have indicated this. The *Sahaba*, those who followed them and the scholars of Islam are in agreement with this. The words of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*): “And He is with them wherever they are...” mean He is with them with His knowledge.

A Muslim must be careful not to deny or reject what the Qur'an and Sunnah have stated and as-Salaf are in agreement with it. A Muslim should follow the way of the first Muslims; the *Muhajrin* and the *Ansar* and those who followed them in righteousness.

Yahya M. Al-Hussein
Dublin Mosque