

Where Is Allah?

Description: The answer to the question of Allah`s presence, supported by evidence that He is indeed above the heavens and above His creation.

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Objectives

- To understand the divine attribute of '*uluw*' and its meaning.
- To understanding the significance of this attribute.
- To learn the five evidences.
- To appreciate that belief in this attribute does not mean Allah is detached from His creation.

Arabic Terms

- *Sunnah* - The word *Sunnah* has several meanings depending on the area of study however the meaning is generally accepted to be, whatever was reported that the Prophet said, did, or approved.
- *Salah* - the Arabic word to denote a direct connection between the believer and Allah. More specifically, in Islam it refers to the formal five daily prayers and is the most important form of worship.

The Merciful Creator describes Himself in the Quran, and the Prophet has described His Lord in the *Sunnah*, because human intellect is limited and cannot fathom the limitless scope of the divine. Allah tells us what is necessary for us to know about Himself, helping to prevent confusion about His being, actions and location. After all, how can we love someone we do not know? Therefore, the Quran and *Sunnah* tell us everything we need to know in order to worship our Creator. The divine attribute of '*Uluw*, highness or transcendence, is the topic of this lesson.

Meaning and Significance

The divine attribute '*Uluw* means Allah is above His creation, and nothing is above Him. He is neither within His creation, nor part of His creation. Creation cannot encompass Him. The Creator is completely separate and distinct from His creation.

Before Islam, Hindus believed God resided in animals, human beings and countless

idols. The Jewish scripture stated that God came to earth in the form of a man and wrestled with Prophet Jacob who defeated Him (Genesis 32:24-30). Christians have claimed that God became flesh and came down to earth in the form of a man to be crucified. Some heretics also brought such ideas into Islam. For example, Hallaj, a deranged mystic, openly claimed he and Allah were one. These deviant ideas have become so widespread that if someone were to ask many Muslims today, 'Where is Allah?' they will say that He is everywhere.

The main danger of this thought is that it opens the door to the worship of creation. If God is everywhere, it means He is in His creation. If that is true, then why not worship the creation itself? It becomes especially easy for people to start saying God is in their own souls and accept worship. Countless kings, ordinary individuals like the Pharaohs of Egypt and Jesus were so worshipped, though the latter did not accept being worshipped by his followers.

The Evidence

Allah is not everywhere. There are five main proofs for it:

- (1) Islam states that every human being is born with certain tendencies that are not the result of his environment. Human beings are born with a natural realization of a Creator who is separate and above His creation. The mere thought of God being in places of filth, which would be a natural consequence of God being everywhere, is repulsive to human nature.
- (2) The *salah* prayer must be offered in a place clear of pictures or statues. A Muslim is forbidden to bend or prostrate in worship to any creation. If Allah were everywhere and in everything, people could worship other people or themselves.
- (3) Two years before the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, migrated to Medina from Mecca, he was taken on a miraculous journey to Mecca to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem up beyond the seven heavens to meet Allah. Allah spoke directly to Prophet Muhammad. There would have been no need for him to go up beyond the seven heavens to meet Allah if He were present everywhere.
- (4) Many verses of the Quran tell us clearly that Allah is above His creation.

The Quran speaks of the angels rising up to Allah:

“They ascend up to Him in a day whose length is like a thousand years by your reckoning.” (Quran 32:5)

Prayers also rise up to Allah:

“Every good saying goes up to Him.” (Quran 35:10)

Allah describes Himself as above His servants:

“He is the Irresistible One above His creation.” (Quran 6:18, 61)

He describes His worshippers as:

“Those who fear their Lord who is above them.” (Quran 16:50)

One of Allah’s beautiful names is al-Aliy which means, ‘The Most High’; nothing is above Him.

(5) A companion of the Prophet, may the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon him, named Ibn al-Hakam had a slave who used to tend his sheep. One day, he came to see her and found out that a wolf had eaten one of the sheep from the flock she cared for. Learning this, he got angry and slapped her in the face, but later regretted doing so. So he came to Allah’s Messenger and told him the story, upon which the Messenger asked him to bring her.

When she came, the Prophet asked her, **‘Where is Allah?’** She answered, ‘Above the sky.’ The Prophet asked her, **‘Who am I?’** She said, ‘You are the Messenger of Allah.’ He said, **‘Free her, for she is a believer.’**[\[1\]](#)

Here, the Prophet affirmed her statement that Allah was above the sky. Had Allah not been, the Prophet would have indeed reproached her as he reproached other false beliefs.

Is Allah Detached From His Creation?

Allah’s being above His creation does not mean He is isolated from His creation. He is aware of all that happens in the universe. Nothing escapes His vision, hearing, power, and ability. The following verses should be understood in this context:

“And We are closer to Him than his jugular vein.” (Quran 50:16)

“Be aware that Allah comes between a man and his heart.” (Quran 8:24)

These verses do not mean Allah is inside a man. They simply mean that nothing escapes Allah’s knowledge. He knows even the most innermost thoughts of man, as Allah says in another verse in the Quran:

“Do they not realize Allah knows what they hide and what they expose?” (Quran 2:77)

In summary, based on the Quran and *Sunnah*, Allah is above the universe in a manner befitting His greatness; the creation is not in Him, nor is He contained by His creation. However, He is all Aware and Able in His knowledge, power, and ability operate within every single particle of the universe.

Comment

Endnotes:

[\[1\]](#) Saheeh Muslim

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