

Allaah's Attributes of Mocking and Ridiculing

Adapted for www.albaanee.com from an article translated by Isma'eel Alarcon [al-Asalah Magazine, Issue 3]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Question: What should be said concerning Allaah's saying:

اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ

Allaah mocks at them [al-Baqarah 02:15]

and

سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ

Allaah ridicules them [at-Tawbah 09:79]

as well as what is similar to that from the Mutashaabihaat (unclear) verses?

Shaykh al-Albaanee (rahimahullaah)¹ answers: The Salaf (Predecessors) used to say concerning these ayaat as well as those similar to them: "Leave them as they are stated." But they did not mean by this to leave them the way they are without attaching any understanding to them. Rather, they meant by it, to leave them the way they are stated according to their correct understanding, without making comparisons for (the Attributes of Allaah stated in) them (tashbeeh), describing their manner (takyeef), misinterpreting them (ta'weel) and denying them (ta'teel). Allaah says:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

There is nothing like Him; and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer [ash-Shooraa 42:11]

In this ayah, there is tanzeeh (negation of all anthropomorphic qualities from Allaah) as well as ithbaat (affirmation) for two attributes for Himself, which are hearing and seeing. The understanding of this elimination of all similarities to Allaah (tanzeeh) is that we must (also) affirm the attributes that Allaah has described Himself with or the Messenger, (صلى الله عليه وسلم)², has described Him with, as it befits His grandness, may He be Glorified and Exalted.

And we do not say "how" that is, such as by saying: "His hearing is like our hearing and His seeing is like our seeing."

Likewise, we do not misinterpret that (i.e. make ta'weel) as has been done by some of the extremists from the Mu'tazilah, such that they have misinterpreted Allaah's hearing and seeing to be His knowledge. And this is in spite of Allaah's describing Himself with knowledge in many other ayaat of the Noble Qur'aan! Thus, the misinterpretation (ta'weel) of these individuals of hearing and seeing for knowledge constitutes ta'teel (denial of Allaah's Attributes). The scholars say about this: "The one who commits ta'teel worships nothing, while the one who commits tajseem worships a statue."³

Based on this, we say, concerning the two ayahs mentioned previously in the question, which contain Allaah's mocking and ridiculing, that it is a mocking and a ridiculing that is befitting for Allaah. And it is not like that which limited intellects may perceive it to be, from that which has comparisons to the creation.

¹ (rahimahullaah) (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) May Allaah have mercy on him

² (صلى الله عليه وسلم) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

³ Translator's Note: This is because the one who commits ta'teel (mu'attil) denies all of Allaah's Attributes, so it is as if he is worshipping nothing. On the other hand, the one who commits tajseem (mujassim) ascribes anthropomorphic qualities to Allaah, for example saying His eyes are like our eyes and His hand is like our hands. So it is like He is worshipping a statue