13491 - "Questions about Allah's descending"

the question

lowest heaven and says: 'No one asks more about my servants thatn myself. Who is asking me, so I can give to him? Who is calling uon me, so I can answer him? who is seeking my forgiveness, so I can forgive him?'". I got two questions about this hadith.
Does Allah descend to the lowest heavnes, or to the earth. There is another hadith saying that Allah comes in the shadow of the clouds and some animals know it except for jinn and mankind. I am confused, does Allah descend to the lowest heavens and animals sense it or he descends to earth?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly: The matters that you have asked about are matters of the Unseen which man cannot know except via Revelation – i.e., the Qur’aan and Sunnah. Undoubtedly the divine descent ends at the lowest heaven, and Allah does not descend to the earth, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stated: “Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven,” he did not say: to the earth.

Secondly: With regard to what you mentioned about Allah coming in the shade of the clouds, and that some animals recognize that, after researching in the available books of hadeeth, and studying the words of the scholars of deep knowledge who spoke of the issue of the descent of the Lord – may He be exalted – to the lowest heaven, we did not find anything to indicate that any such thing can be proven. What we have to do is to affirm that which was affirmed by the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), which is that Allah descends to the lowest heaven, and that He descends in a manner that befits Him, and we refer knowledge of anything other than that to the One Who knows it, may He be exalted and glorified, for He is the

All-Knowing, All-Wise.

But it states in the Holy Qur'aan that when Allah comes on the Day of Resurrection to pass judgement, He will come in the shade of the clouds, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Do they then wait for anything other than that Allah should come to them in the shadows of the clouds and the angels? (Then) the case would be already judged. And to Allah return all matters (for decision)"

[al-Baqarah 2:210]

But this will happen on the Day of Resurrection.

And it should be noted that there is no contradiction at all between our belief that Allah is above all things and that He is the Exalted, the Almighty, and our belief that He descends to the lowest heaven, for the highness of Allah is one of His essential attributes which cannot alter or change – i.e., it cannot be other than it is described at any time – so there is no contradiction between them, firstly, because the texts refer to both of them (i.e., His descending and His highness), and the texts cannot say anything that is impossible as is well known; and secondly, because there is nothing like unto Allah in all His attributes, so His descending is not like the descening of any of His creatures so that one could say that it contradicts the idea of His being exalted.

And Allah knows best.

See: Kitaab al-Sunnah by Ibn Abi 'Aasim, 215; Majmoo' Fataawa wa Rasaa'il al-Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen.