130759 - What some of them say about Allah, “A body not like other bodies”

the question

We live in XXXX as a minority. Here there is a man who claims that Allah is a body not like other bodies. He said in some chat rooms: “The basic principle is that Allah is a body [physical body], but we do not know how His body is. His body is not like other bodies, because there is nothing like unto Him.” Is this idea correct? What is the Islamic ruling on the one who says this? What are we obliged to do regarding this and the one who says it?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The idea that Allah is a body [physical being] not like other bodies is not correct, because there is nothing in the Qur’an or Sunnah to indicate that Allah, may He be exalted, may be described as being a body. The basic principle that is followed by Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa‘ah is that Allah, may He be exalted, is to be described in the ways that He has described Himself or His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) has described Him. So we should not go beyond what is mentioned in the Qur’an and hadith. But if the one who believes that He is a body wants to affirm that Allah, may He be exalted, is all-hearing and all-seeing, that He speaks, that He rose over His Throne, and that He may be seen and referred to, and other attributes, it may be said to him: These attributes are true, but you are mistaken when you refer to them or some of them in terms of Him being a body. Hence this wording is not known from the early generations of this ummah.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The word “body” is very general. It could refer to something that was put together, of which the parts were separate then they were put together; or something that can be divided and separated into parts; or something

that consists of physical material and an image; or something that consists of single particles that are put together, but Allah, may He be exalted, is far above all that; or something that was separate then came together; or something that can be divided and separated, meaning that one part of the thing separates from another part; or it may indicate some other meaning that refers to something that is put together – which is impossible in the case of Allah.

It may be that what is meant by body is something that can be indicated or pointed out, or seen, or something in which attributes could exist. Allah, may He be exalted, will be seen in the hereafter, attributes exist in Him, and people point or gesture towards Him with their hands, hearts, faces and eyes when they offer supplication (du'aa'). If what a person means when he says that He is not a body is this meaning, it may be said to him: The idea that you are denying when you say this is something that is confirmed by sound reports and sound reasoning, and you have no evidence for denying it. However the wording itself is an innovation, whether you deny it or affirm it. This term – "body" – is not found in the Qur'an or Sunnah, or in the wording of any of the early generations of this ummah or their leading scholars when speaking of the attributes of Allah, may He be exalted, either by way of denying or affirming. End quote from *Bayaan Talbees al-Jahamiyyah* (1/550).

Thus it becomes clear that this word "body" [physical being] is very general and may be understood in a correct manner or a wrong manner. It is an innovated term that is not mentioned in the religious texts either by way of denying or affirming. Therefore it must be avoided.

The one who says that Allah is a body not like other bodies should be advised and told to limit himself to speaking of that which Allah attributed to Himself in His Book or on the lips of His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and to adhere to the way of the early generations.

As-Safaareeni (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Imam Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Allah, may He be exalted, cannot be described except in the terms in which He described Himself or His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) described Him, and we should not go beyond what is mentioned in the Qur'an and hadith.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The view of the early generations is that they attributed to Allah, may He be exalted, that which He attributed to Himself and that which His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) attributed to Him, without distorting or denying, and without discussing how or likening Him to His creation.

The denier worships nothing, and the one who likens Him to His creation worships an idol, but the Muslim worships the God of earth and heaven. End quote from *Lawaami' al-Anwaar al-Bahiyyah* (1/24).

And Allah knows best.