



222703 - The angels are physical beings made of light; their nature and behaviour cannot be compared to those of humans

the question

If the angels are of different sizes, then why do they come down on a day that is the equivalent of a thousand years?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, says: {He governs all things from heaven to earth, then everything will ascend to Him on a day the length of which is one thousand years by your reckoning } [as-Sajdah 32:5].

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

That is, His command comes down from the highest heavens to the lowest part of the seventh earth, and deeds are taken up to the place where their record is kept above the lowest heaven; the distance between it and the earth is the distance of five hundred years, and the depth of the heaven is five hundred years. Mujahid, Qatadah and ad-Dahhak said: The descent of the angel is the distance of five hundred years, and his ascent is the distance of five hundred years, but he crosses it in the blink of an eye. (*Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, 6/359).

For more information, please see the answer to question no. [179186](#).

Secondly:

Muslim (2996) narrated that `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah



(blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The angels were created from light, the jinn were created from smokeless fire and Adam was created from that which has been described to you.”

Therefore the angels are physical beings made of light and are not – as some ignorant people claim – souls without physical bodies, nor are they good souls that left their bodies, or sublime forces, or sublime concepts, or heavenly bodies [stars and planets] and other false notions.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The angels are physical beings, not souls without bodies, but Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, has concealed them from us and created them as an unseen realm. Similarly, the jinn are physical beings, but Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, has concealed them from us and created them as an unseen realm.

The angels may appear in human form, as Jibril (peace be upon him) once came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in the form of Dihyah al-Kalbi, and on another occasion, he came to him in the form of a stranger on whom no signs of travel could be seen, and the Sahabah did not recognize him. He was wearing white garments and his hair was black, and he sat down before the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and asked him about Islam, faith (iman), ihsan, and the Hour and its portents. (*Sharh Riyad as-Salihin*, 4/392-393).

The shaykh also said:

The angels are undoubtedly physical beings, as Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, says: {[Allah] made the angels messengers with wings} [Fatir 35:1]. And the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The heaven creaked.” The word translated here as creaking refers to the sound made by a saddle. In other words, if the camel is carrying a heavy load, you hear the saddle or pack frame creaking because of the heaviness of the load. This is further supported by the hadith about Jibril (peace be upon him) which says that he had six hundred wings which filled the horizon. And there is a great deal of evidence to support that.



As for those who say that the angels are souls with no bodies, their view is weird and misguided. What is even weirder is those who say that the angels are a metaphor for good forces in human souls, and the devils are a metaphor for evil forces. This is one of the falsest of views.

End quote from *Sharh al-Arba`in an-Nawawiyah*, p. 61-62. See also: *Majmu` Fatawa wa Rasa'il al-Uthaymin*, 5/118-119.

Shaykh `Umar al-Ashqar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

As the angels are subtle physical bodies made of light, people cannot see them, especially since Allah has not given our eyes the ability to see them. No one of this ummah saw the angels in their true form except the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). He saw Jibril twice in the form in which Allah created him. The religious texts indicate that humans are able to see angels if the angels appear in human form. (*`Alam al-Mala'ikat al-Abrar*, p. 11).

Summary: The angels (peace be upon him) were created from light, so they are luminous physical beings, who are not like humans in nature. They constantly obey and worship Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, and their actions, nature and behaviour cannot be compared to those of humans. They carry out what their Lord commands them to do, and they ascend to Him in an instant, the length of which for humans is like a thousand years by their reckoning.

This comes under the heading of knowledge of the unseen, which we are obliged to believe in and accept what Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, tells us about it.

Moreover, we cannot see any contradiction between the fact that the angels are physical beings of different sizes – or even if they were not like that – and the fact that they descend in a day the length of which is like a thousand years. The fact that they are physical beings does not mean that they cannot descend like that, and even if we assume that they are not physical beings, that does not mean that they cannot descend or they can descend.

What the individual should do is research that will benefit him in religious terms, and ask about it.

For more information, see the book *`Alam al-Mala'ikah al-Abrar* by Shaykh `Umar al-Ashqar (may



Allah have mercy on him), which contains a great deal of beneficial information about this topic.
[This book is available in English under the title *The World of the Noble Angels*, published by IIPH, Riyadh].

And Allah knows best.