

## **A Discussion on ARSH** **THRONE OF ALLAH – at-Taba Tabai (AR)**

- Actually there is no physical existence of any Arsh,
- and the words “ And He rose over the Throne” or the “ Rahman sat on the throne” denote the lordship of God over all the creations.
- Sometimes the word “Istawa” is used in the sense of “Istila” or predominance.
- The taking control over the throne may denote the manner in which a king sits on the throne when he begins his official work of administration making enquiries about his kingdom.
- But this cannot apply to God,
- because He is the all-knowing and is aware of all that goes on in His created worlds,
- so we can say that He rises over or assumes control to bestow the divine graces on mankind.
- Or we can say that he created mankind gave him life, and then death etc.

*There is a doubt about this view, though we confirm the same that it is a symbolism about God taking control of all creations as befits His Lordship, to enforce His control and kingship, His power to implement His orders that are evident in our system of life. It is true that according to our statements the manifest decrees a way of life. God speaks about all these truth for He is the all-knowing.*

In other words even if kingship and total control have the same meaning as we derive out from the manifest verses of the Qur’an, there is a difference in their meaning and application. They are pure decrees truly applicable to His Divine Presence but for us they are commandments that do not cross the limit for us. We call someone our leader because we follow his guidance and orders and not that this society is our body and he is the head. When we call someone the heart of something or a part of something we do not do so because he is actually a heart but that he acts as the heart and the body part essential for a complete physique or body. He is essential to the welfare of our society and our lives are attached to his importance.

In verse 64 of Surah Ankabut god says, “This life is but a vain sport and play” because our religious aims are connected with our wealth, children, well-being, and rulership together with other vague desires. Our strivings to achieve all this is like the play of children and there is no difference in the two. God criticizes this life of ours spent in achieving our vague and vain desires and calls it a wasteful play of children, because it has become the center of dreams and desires.

The words “He rose above the Throne” are a symbolism that denotes the control and kingship of God over the universe. It also proves that this is truth, and this is a station where all the decrees concentrate despite being various and contradictory. There are other verses that prove the same though they speak only about the Arsh or the Throne attributing only to the One God.

This verse denotes the Arsh in relation to administration and control, and it depicts the divine existence of God and His power to impose His will, so intercession will also be connected to His divine will. “None can intercede without His permission.”

Everything takes place because it is allowed to do so by God, like heat that is required for raising the temperature, or the fire that is required to burn things or melt them.

*They are not caused by themselves but by the permission of God, because His permission is required.*

So,

- God knows all that takes place,
- whatever enters earth and
- what comes out of it,
- what descends from the heavens and
- what ascends to it and
- His knowledge is all encompassing.

The angels too who are the carriers of the throne are under His command and control. He is ever present and existed even before the creation of the universe took place. He himself says in Surah Hud, “God created the heavens and earth and all that exist between them in six days and then He rose above the Throne on Water.”

### **A Discussion on Ahadith**

God has created the Arsh from four Nur or lights.

- One is red from which everything red has been created,
- the second is green from which all things green have been created,
- the third is yellow from which all things yellow have been created and
- the fourth is white through which all things white have been created.
- By Arsh we mean that knowledge that God has bestowed upon the carriers.
- It is the light of His omnipotence that is lit in the hearts of the believers and this is why the ignorant consider them to be enemies.
- It is because of this light that every creation on this earth and the heavens search for a pathway that leads to Him.
- They have created different ideologies and religions in search of this path.
- And all that exists is sustained through the light of His omnipotence.
- They do not have the power over harm and benefit and
- they have no power over life and death.
- God has prevented the heavens and the earth from disintegrating by encompassing them.
- He is the light and life of everything.
- His Kursi or control extends over all the heavens and the earth and all that exists between them, but He never tires.
- He is exalted and almighty and in view of this we can say that the carriers of the Arsh are those learned Ulama on whom He has bestowed His knowledge.
- Nothing is beyond the control of these four lights (Nur).
- This is the light He had bestowed on His dear ones and had showed them to the Prophet Ibrahim. He says, “In this, we showed Ibrahim the Light of both the heavens and the earth, so that He becomes one who has certitude.”
- How can the carriers in heaven carry God when they exist because of the life and Nur He has bestowed in their hearts.

All things therefore exist because of the light, the greatness and the power of God. This is the Arsh that encircles us and this light means the total ownership of God. God is the sustainer of this light and is also the sustainer of those on whom this light has been bestowed together with the light itself.

## **A Discussion on KURSI** **THE CHAIR OF ALLAH** – at-Taba Tabai (AR)

al-Ayyashi narrates in his at-Tafsir from as-Sadiq (AS), Abu Dhaka said:

O Messenger of Allah! What is the best of that which has been revealed to you?

He said: The verse of the "Chair".

The seven heavens and the seven earths in the "Chair" are but like a ring thrown in a vast open space.

Then he said: *And surely the excellence of al-Arsh (the Throne) over the chair is like that of the open space over the ring.*

at-Tusi has narrated in his al-Amali, through his chains from Abu Amamah al-Bahili that he heard 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) say:

"I do not think that a man who enters into Islam on attaining wisdom, or was born in Islam (i.e., in a Muslim family) should pass a night's darkness . . . "

(At this juncture Abu Amamah interrupted by asking, "And what is the meaning of a night's darkness?")

Ali (AS) said:

*I have not spent a single night, since I heard it from the Messenger of Allah, without reciting it ... "the whole night") "until he recites this verse: Allah is He besides Whom there is no God. . . ; and he recited the complete verse up to the end: and the preservation of them both tires Him not; and He is the Most High, the Great.*

Then he said:

If you but knew what it is (or, as another version says, "What is in it") you would not leave it on any condition. Surely, the Messenger of Allah (S) said,

I have been given the verse of the Chair from the treasure (that is) below al-'Arsh (the Throne); and no prophet before me was given it.

Then Ali (AS) continued:

I have not spent a single night, since I heard it from the Messenger of Allah, without reciting it . . . "

Hafs ibn al-Ghiyath said: I asked Abu 'Abdillah (a.s.) about the words of Allah: *His Chair extends over the heavens and the earth.* He said:

His knowledge. (Ma'anil-akhbar)

There is another tradition in the same book from the same Imam about this verse which says:

The heavens and the earth and whatever is between them is in the Chair, and the Throne is that knowledge which no one can measure.

Hannan said: I asked Abu 'Abdillah (AS) about the Throne and the Chair. He replied:

- Verily, the Throne has many diverse attributes. Allah uses in the Qur'an various adjectives to describe its various aspects.
- He says: the Lord of the great Throne (9:129). It means; Lord of the great kingdom or authority.
- And He says: The Beneficent (God) on the Throne is firm (20:5). It means that He is firm in His kingdom.
- And it is the knowledge of the "how" of the things.
- Also, the Throne, although together with it, is distinct from the Chair;
- Because they are two of the greatest doors of the unseen, and they both are unseen. And they are together in the unseen, because the Chair is the manifest door of the unseen, from which appears creation and from which all the things come.
- And the Throne is the concealed door of the unseen in which is found the knowledge of the states, conditions and existence; of measure and limit; of will and intention; as well as the knowledge of words, actions and omissions, and the knowledge of the beginning and the return.
- Thus, the two are two gates of knowledge joined together, because the dominion of the Throne is other than the dominion of the Chair, and
- Its (the Throne's) knowledge is more hidden than the knowledge of the Chair.
- That is why Allah said, "the Lord of the great Throne"; that is, its attribute is greater than that of the Chair, And both are joined in it.

(Hannan says) I said: May I be your ransom, then why did it become associated with the Chair in excellence?' He (the Imam) said:

- It was associated with it because the knowledge of the state and condition is found in it.
- And in it are found the manifest doors of al-bada' (the decree hidden from other);
- As well as its reality and the dimensions of its joining and separating.
- Therefore, they are two neighbors, one of which contains the other in itself.
- And by similitude are turned those who know, and so that they may offer proof for the truth of their claims.
  - Because He chooses especially whom He pleases for His mercy, and He is the Mighty, the Powerful. (at-Tawhid)

as-Sadiq (AS) said, inter alia, in a tradition:

Everything which Allah has created is in the receptacle of the Chair, except His Throne, because that is too great for the Chair to encompass. (al-Ihtijaj)