

The Meanings & Blessings of Ayatul Kursi

English Translation of Friday Sermon Delivered by Khalifa tul Masih IV (ra),
Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmed on February 12th, 1999.

Note: Some parts of sermon have not been translated to avoid repetition. Col. (retired)
Munawar Ahmed Mir takes full responsibility for any errors or miscommunication in the
translation of the Friday Sermon.

Summary: *Ayatul Kursi* explains that Allah is Ever-Living, Self-Subsisting and Self-Sustaining. As such, He is eternally awake and alert otherwise the Universe will cease to exist. Allah does not suffer from boredom as He takes great interest in His creation. Nor does He grow tired because His existence is not subject to change. He is the First Cause of everything and possesses infinite power. He owns everything and is the Master of the Day of Judgment. As such, we should worship Allah and seek His assistance in all affairs. He is the Source of all knowledge. Pondering over the meaning of *Ayatul Kursi* opens subtle secrets and knowledge of the Universe in our hearts, which is imperative in a time when the forces of atheism are stronger than ever.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ۚ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي
يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

Allah — there is no God but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep. To Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth. Who is he that will intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them; and they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth; and the care of them burdens Him not; and He is the High, the Great. (Al Quran 2:256)

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

Allāhu Lā 'Ilāha 'Illā Huwa Al-Ĥayyu Al-Qayyūm

Ayatul Kursi or the crown verse of the Holy Quran, begins with the word Allah and then throws light on His attributes. One may feel that the meaning of the whole verse is “Allah and only Allah,” which has always been flowing from the lips of our godly and

spiritual personalities, i.e. *Allah hi Allah, Allah hi Allah* (Allah and only Allah). Nobody can deny that when a person, afflicted with a deadly disease, feels that no prayer or remedy is working, his spontaneous cry is “Oh Allah!” And the mere utterance of this word “Allah” proves to be effective in alleviating his misery. As far as I am concerned the word “Allah” is the most comprehensive prayer when compared with all other prayers. Thus, all the topics covered in *Ayatul Kursi* are subject to the word “Allah.” The Promised Messiah (as) has thrown abundant light on this. So during my sermon, wherever situation requires, I will quote the Promised Messiah (as) on the subject.

Ayatul Kursi states that Allah is Ever-Living, Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining, i.e., *Al-Ĥayyu Al-Qayyūm*: The word *Al-Ĥayyu* has been towed with the word *Al-Qayyūm*, meaning thereby that He is alive on His own, without any support. *Al-Ĥayyu Al-Qayyūm* naturally requires that it should be followed by *لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ* *Lā Ta'khudhuhu Sinatun Wa Lā Nawum*, which means “He neither slumbers nor sleeps.” The One who is living without any support cannot feel sleepy. Inability to sleep, amongst human beings, is considered an ailment, not an asset. Sleep is needed to remove fatigue. But since God does not feel fatigue, he does not sleep. Slumber is the precursor of sleep. That is why it has been placed before *Nawum* (sleep). A tired person who cannot concentrate on the job at hand, tends to doze off i.e. slumber. Boredom, which is due to a lack of interest, also induces sleep. At times a person sitting in a company may feel bored even though he is not tired. In this case, his tendency to doze off is not due to fatigue but due to the lack of interest in the subject. So, interest in anything keeps one alive and keeps slumber away. Thus the overall meaning of “He neither slumbers nor sleeps” is that He takes interest in whatever He has created. If He dozes off, everything will come to naught. He cannot be unmindful of supporting the Universe for even a moment and this responsibility is not challenging for Allah since He does not have to exert effort to sustain the Universe. He does not slumber even for a moment, because He is always interested in His Creation, and He knows that His lack of interest in the Universe will mean its death. Our Universe is not the only Universe of which He is the Creator. Only Allah knows the number of Universes He has created.

There is an Arab saying, *al naum ukh tul maut*, which means “sleep is the sister of death.” Death is a source of comfort for humans. Humans, when they get tired of their life-long work, desire for solace and death. For them, sleep is a kind of death, as in sleep, one gets relief albeit for a limited time. There are those people who come to me, who have come close to insanity and some of them have even become insane due to insomnia. At times, they even say to me that “pray for our death, because we cannot sleep.” In other words, they are saying that death is not coming, therefore pray for our death. Thus sleep and death are two sides of the same coin. So, if Allah is not overtaken by slumber, how can He sleep? Sleep is the other name of relief and solace, which a tired person needs. Allah does not tire. It is change that causes tiredness. Anything that does not undergo change does not get tired. No sane person can differ with the fact that human life is subject to continuous change and it is these changes that cause a person to wear out and to grow old. As they tire out, they head towards death, their ultimate destination. You should fully understand that there is no change in the Personage of God. To the degree that you consider God subject to change, you will place a constraint on God. Of course, since you cannot constrain His attributes, your understanding of God will come to naught. The greatest philosophical truth that has been described in this context is that: God is the First Cause of everything. Being so, He cannot be subject to change because if He is subject to change then He cannot be the First Cause. It is a complicated philosophical problem beyond the understanding of a common person, particularly for those people who have no interest in philosophy. However, the fact remains that anything which is subject to change can diminish with the passage of time. So God, not being subject to change, possesses permanent power. And His permanent power becomes the cause of permanent existence of this Universe. If one ponders over this verse, i.e. *Ayatul Kursi*, one gets surprised to discover how wonderful it is. Though the Personage of God is beyond the comprehension of the human mind, reflection on this verse will shed abundant light on His Personage.

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ *Lahu Mā Fī As-Samāwāti Wa Mā Fī Al-'Arđi* states that whatever is in the heavens and the earth, all belongs to Allah. This fact is a logical

follow-up of the previous part of this verse, which states that Allah neither slumbers nor sleeps. Because everything belongs to Him, He neither slumbers nor sleeps. If He is to sustain His creation, He must remain alert and aware for without His vigilance His creation will perish.

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

Mun Dhā Al-Ladhī Yashfa`u `Indahu 'Illā Bi'idhnihi means who is it that shall intercede with Him, except with His permission? He alone being the Master has the power to forgive. He decides whether forgiveness is desirable or not. He being the sole Master has the perfect knowledge as to who deserves forgiveness and who does not. The meaning of the word *Master* or *Owner* is important. A Judge cannot forgive a sin, whereas a Master can do whatever He desires. Nobody can question Him; He can forgive anyone whom He wishes. But His wish or desire is only consistent with wisdom. It must be remembered that word *Mun* here means Holy Prophet (saw). Who is it whom Allah can permit to intercede? It is Allah Himself who can permit somebody to intercede. It means that whosoever has been granted permission to intercede is fully trustworthy and is capable of living up to Allah's trust. In fact, the Holy Prophet (saw) has been granted the authority to intercede based upon his complete accord with God's will. Thus a person, who always acts in complete accord with Allah's will, will never intercede about a matter which goes against the Will of God.

The second subject of intercession is derived from *shafa*. Before I dilate upon this, I will quote the Promised Messiah (as) so that we understand the real meaning of *shafaat*.

Allah says in the next part of *Ayatul Kursi*: *يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ* *Ya`lamu Mā Bayna*

'Aydīhim Wa Mā Khalfahum, meaning that the people for whom intercession is destined and who are destined to be forgiven, their past as well as their future is fully known to God. One meaning that can be derived from intercession i.e. *shafaat* is that nothing is hidden from God. And those who are to be permitted to intercede, their past and future are fully known to Him. *Mā Bayna 'Aydīhim Wa Mā Khalfahum* also states that “He knows what is (presently) before them and what will be after them.” This does not merely refer to humanity's past, present, and future, but also relates to the past, present and future of the whole universe.

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ

Wa Lā Yuhīṭūna Bishay'in Min `Ilmihi 'Illā Bimā Shā'a means nothing can comprehend His Knowledge, without His Will. It also means that when He wills, one can comprehend His knowledge, but its comprehension will be limited to the extent as desired by Him. If He so desires, one may not be able to comprehend His knowledge at all. This shows that all progress in the world of knowledge is subject to His Will. On his own accord, no human being can make progress. God desires that human faculties, which are God given, come into play only on a given occasion or situation. The dawn of every new kind of knowledge, at the proper time, makes us understand this verse. Whenever He desires He opens a new door of knowledge for us. And He desires so only when we need it. This part of the verse especially sheds light on the stage by stage progression of human knowledge.

Then Allah says وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ *Wasi`a Kursiyuhu As-Samāwāti Wa Al-'Arḍa* that is “His Throne encompasses both the heavens and the earth.” *Kursi* also means knowledge and at this place, this meaning alone is appropriate i.e. His knowledge encompasses the whole universe.

The next portion of the verse وَلَا يَؤُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ *Wa Lā Ya'ūduhu Ḥifẓuhumā ۗ Wa Huwa Al-`Alīyu Al-`Aẓīmu* states that the preservation of such all-encompassing knowledge does not cause Allah any fatigue. He is the Greatest and the Highest. As for the meanings of these two parts of the verse, *Wasi`a Kursiyuhu As-Samāwāti Wa Al-'Arḍa Wa Huwa Al-`Alīyu Al-`Aẓīmu*, the Promised Messiah (as) has given a commentary which till today stands unparalleled. Such meanings have never been thought of by any commentator before. This is a fundamental part of the verse, and without understanding this, the verse cannot be understood at all. These meanings were definitely revealed to the Holy Prophet (saw) but the details were destined to be disclosed by the Promised Messiah (as).

We are at that advanced stage of knowledge wherein true understanding of this verse is of paramount importance in order to sustain our belief in the existence of God. If we ignore

the importance of the subject at hand then we, as a people, will be living in times wherein the very mention of the name of God will be considered a crime. A famous Urdu poet writes:

*“raquebo nay report likhwai hai jaja kay thanay main
Akbar Khuda ka nam lehtha hai is zamanay main”*

“Akbar’s rivals have lodged a complaint at the police station,
That Akbar takes the name of God in this age.”

Do we find ourselves today in the same situation in which Akbar found himself? Akbar wrote this couplet a very long time ago, but it holds more truth today than it did in his day. It is a fact that never before in human history, has atheism entrenched itself so firmly on our planet. It is therefore of absolute importance to highlight the meanings of *Ayatul Kursi*. It is in this age that the Promised Messiah (as) has made scholarly commentary on *Ayatul Kursi*, both in writing and in discourse, which are recorded in *Malfoozat*.

Now I will place before you a *hadith*. Hadhrat Ibn-Isqah-ha (ra) relates that he heard the Holy Prophet (saw) saying that somebody asked him as to which is the greatest verse of the Holy Quran. The Holy Prophet (saw) replied. *Allāhu Lā 'Ilāha 'Illā Huwa Al-Ĥayyu Al-Qayyūm Lā Ta'khudhuhu Sinatun Wa Lā Nawmun*. Similarly Abu Hurairah (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said that everything has a top and the top of the Quran is *Surah Al-Baqarah* and in it there is the greatest verse which is the head of all verses of Quran and that is the *Ayatul Kursi* or the Crown verse. Thus, *Surah al-Baqarah* comes at the top because *Ayatul Kursi* enjoys the highest rank in Quran.

Hadhrat Abi-Kaab (ra) relates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, “Oh Abu Manzar, “Do you know which verse of Quran is the greatest in import?” Abu Manzar replied, “Allah and His Messenger know better.” The Holy Prophet (saw) further said, “O Abu Manzar, “Do you know which verse amongst the portions of Quran you remember is of the highest rank?” The Holy Prophet (saw) used to observe his companions with such keen observation that he even knew about many of his companions as to which parts of Quran they had learned by heart. The companions also used to take pride in the fact that the

Holy Prophet (saw) knew as to how much Quran they had learnt by heart. It appears that they used to keep the Holy Prophet (saw) informed about their progress in remembering Quran because they believed that by doing so they will be blessed in learning more Quran. The Holy Prophet (saw) again said, “Which is the greatest verse in rank amongst the portions of Quran you remember?” It looks that by doing so the Holy Prophet (saw) was giving a cue to him as one gives cue in solving riddles. Abu Manzar spontaneously replied “*Allāhu Lā 'Ilāha 'Illā Huwa Al-Ĥayyu Al-Qayyūm*. Undoubtedly, amongst the portions of Quran I remember, this is the greatest verse.” After this Holy Prophet (saw) patted his chest and said, “O Abu Manzar, may knowledge be a blessing for you. This verse i.e. *Ayatul Kursi* is the fountainhead of knowledge.” Thus the Holy Prophet (saw) indicated to Abu Manzar that he should keep pondering over this verse and God will thus bless him with abundant knowledge.

Now I will explain the two attributes, *Al-Ĥayyu Al-Qayyūm*, by quoting from excerpts of the Promised Messiah’s writing. The Promised Messiah (as) says, “We should know that Quran has presented two names of Allah i.e., *Al-Ĥayyu* and *Al-Qayyūm*. *Al Hayye* means the Ever-Living and the Constant Support of life in the universe. *Al-Qayyūm* means Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining.” How did the Promised Messiah (as) arrive at these meanings? It is because both these words come after “Allah is One, who is Ever-Living.” If there exists anything else in the universe which is living, it is only because He has given it life. The Promised Messiah (as) has provided us with the insight that *Al-Ĥayyu* means not only the Ever Living, but also the One who gives life. Then he says *Al-Qayyūm*: the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. Just as in the case of *Al-Ĥayyu*, *Al-Qayyūm* has a two-fold meaning as well. It does not only mean Self-Subsisting but also means All-Sustaining. Everything owes its existence, both external and internal, to these two attributes of God. The external alone is visible to us whereas the knowledge of internal rests with Allah alone. But the sustenance of the existence of both, depend on Allah’s will. The Promised Messiah’s commentary contains all these meanings. It is difficult for common person to understand it, because it requires a lot of patience and time to delve deep into its meanings.

Allah says everything owes its existence to these two of His attributes i.e. *Al-Ĥayyu*, the Ever-Living and Constant Support of life in the universe, and *Al-Qayyūm*, the Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining. The attribute of *Ĥayyu* indicates His worthiness to be worshipped. Thus the logical conclusion of *Ĥayyu* is the declaration in *Surah Fatihah* **إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ** “*Iyyaaka na'-budu*: Thee alone do we worship.” The attribute of *Qayyūm* highlights His all-encompassing power and thus demands that His support be sought. This demand is in line with the prayer of *Surah Fatihah*, **إِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ** “*Iyyaaka nasta-'iin*: Thee alone do we beseech for help.” Only with God’s special favors can one understand the mutual relationship between these attributes of God and the prayers found in *Surah Fatihah*. Surely, Allah had bestowed this special favor upon the Promised Messiah (as), who shared it with us in brief. Our job is to study this relationship in depth in order to acquire a true understanding of it.

The Promised Messiah (as) says that the attribute *Al-Ĥayyu* (The Ever-Living and Constant Support of everything) demands that Allah be worshipped. How does *Ĥayyu* relate to worship? One of its interpretations is that a servant has nothing of his own. His life depends on the will of his master. There may be servants in the world that can run away and take care of their needs from another source. But it is not possible for Allah’s servants, whether they are spiritually attuned to Him or not, to survive without Him, as He alone is the source of all life. Thus, this is the relationship between a servant of Allah and Allah’s attribute of *Al-Ĥayyu*. The word *Al-Ĥayyu* demands that He be worshipped as it is reflected in “*Iyyaaka na'-budu*: Thee alone do we worship” in *Surah Fatihah*. The Promised Messiah (as) has not dwelled more on these two subjects, in the excerpt that I am referring to, because he has thrown abundant light on this matter elsewhere.

Whether we admit it or not, the fact of the matter is that we seek sustenance through this prayer of “*Iyyaaka na'-budu*: Thee alone do we worship.” Throughout the world, scientists are striving towards maximizing food production and making great scientific discoveries towards that end, in the hope of solving the food problems of humanity. But the treasure of food is bestowed by Allah. Thus, whether their striving is accompanied

by this admission or not, there is no other source from which they will acquire it, save from Allah. Hence the cry *Iyyaaka na'-budu* is instinctively issuing forth from their hearts. But the unfortunate ones, being devoid of spirituality, fail to grasp the meaning of these words.

Now when we say that *Surah Fatihah* is the mother of Quran and within its verses resides the whole of the Quran, then how can we claim that *Ayatul Kursi* is the highest in rank? It is because the heart of the *Ayatul Kursi* ultimately resides in *Surah Fatihah*. Thus, the *Ayatul Kursi* is not a rival of *Surah Fatihah*. *Surah Fatihah* is indeed life giving and *Ayatul Kursi* draws its life from it. The essence of all subjects covered in the *Ayatul Kursi* is also found in *Surah Fatihah*. So, do not presume them to be in oppositional ranks. When the Promised Messiah (as) at some places refers to *Surah Fatihah* as everything and elsewhere refers to *Ayatul Kursi* as everything, there is no contradiction in such statements. The key to understanding this fact resides in understanding *Iyyaaka na'-budu, wa Iyyaaka nasta-'iin*. The Promised Messiah (as) teaches us that the divine attribute of *Al-Qayyūm* articulates the truth that all support must be sought from God, because nothing can exist without His support. Once life is granted, its maintenance also requires support. That support is expressed in the divine attribute of *Al-Qayyūm* (Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining). The second expression of *Qayyūm*, i.e. All-Sustaining, is found in the words *Iyyaaka nasta-'iin*: “Thee alone do we beseech for help,” which encompasses a broader meaning, which is: “We desire life from You because except You nobody else can give life and the span and quality of this life is entirely dependent on Your Will.” Thus, the prayer *Iyyaaka nasta-'iin*, invokes the Divine attribute of *Qayyūm*, and through this prayer one seeks the All-encompassing Support of God.

In his writings, the Promised Messiah (as) draws our attention to the fact that whosoever steadfastly supplicates to Allah, becomes a true seeker. All Muslims who offer prayers do recite *Surah Fatihah* in every prayer many times over, but they do not try to understand its meanings while reciting it. Thus, he states, they do not realize that Support does exist, but one must ask for it and the more one asks for it, the more it is granted. All our progress depends upon our seeking support from that Eternal Support.

I will shed some light on the subject, *Lā Ta'khudhuhu Sinatun Wa Lā Nawmun*: “Neither slumber nor sleep seizes Him,” with reference to the Promised Messiah’s writings. The Promised Messiah (as) describes the deep relationship between *ownership* and *slumber and sleep*. The real existence, real immortality and permanence and all other true attributes belong to God. He has no partner. He is Ever-Living, and everything else gets life and sustenance from Him. He is Self-Subsisting and All-Sustaining, thus death cannot overtake Him and therefore the slightest suspension of any of His attributes is not permitted (*jaiiz*).

The word permitted (*jaiiz*) does not connote an externally imposed *Shariah* for God, which determines what is permissible for Him and what is not. If we study it in depth, we find that the *Shariah* is in itself an expression of God’s attributes. Thus Allah’s attributes are not subject to suspension, even to the slightest degree. I have explained this before. Whatever you see in the heavens and earth, all belong to Him. Everything is created and sustained by Him. He alone is the Master, and no being other than Him can truly be Master: “Who is it that can intercede with Him, except by His permission, He knows what is before and what will be after them,” i.e. His knowledge encompasses past, present and future, seen as well as unseen, including whatever is unknown to people whether about themselves or about external world.

Now I place before you an excerpt from Promised Messiah’s (as) writing, i.e., his commentary on this verse: “*Allāhu Lā 'Ilāha 'Illā Huwa Al-Ĥayyu Al-Qayyūm Lā Ta'khudhuhu Sinatun Wa Lā Nawmun Lahu Mā Fī As-Samāwāti Wa Mā Fī Al-'Ardī.*” He said, “Now we should see with complete impartiality that how eloquently, elegantly, and with what gravity and wisdom, the existence of a Creator of the universe has been expounded in this verse.” I had said in the beginning that due to ignorance and lack of education, our era has become an era of atheism, but the arguments cited in this verse, cannot be refuted. There can be no rebuttal to them. The Promised Messiah (as) writes that divine argument provided in *Ayatul Kursi* are eloquent and dignified. If one ponders over these divine arguments, one can grasp its meanings. *Ayatul Kursi* has expounded the Greatest and the First Cause i.e. God, in so few words. You cannot find any parallel to this in the universe. *La Hu Mā Fī As-Samāwāti Wa Mā Fī Al-'Ardī*: “*To Him belongs*

whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth” has given such strong argument to prove the existence of a Creator of this universe that no scholar has been able to contest it. This portion of *Ayatul Kursi* implies that philosophers have failed to comprehend the true cause of Creation. These philosophers, for example, have not been able to fully appreciate that the body and the soul have been created. They do not even know how the body is created. These philosophers remain ignorant of the subtle secret that real existence, real being, and real permanence can only be ascribed to God. This argument needs further explanation. I’ll explain it in the next 2-3 minutes left in the sermon. **The Promised Messiah (as) says “In reality, life and permanence belong to Allah alone, who is Possessor of the Perfect attributes, except Him, nobody possesses these attributes. From this fact the argument of the need for a Creator is deduced.”** Created is one which occurs and is not everlasting. If a thing that occurs is highly complicated and has depth in its structure and an excellent scheme in its being, it cannot occur on its own. It must have a Creator. Thus it follows that the whole universe has been created, which means that before its creation, it did not exist. If it did not exist before and now having come into existence one finds in it structure, order, and intricacy, then it logically necessitates the existence of some Intelligent Being who understands all those things which are found in His Creation. Otherwise, without understanding them, He could not have made it accordingly. Only a great painter can understand paintings. A casual observer cannot fully comprehend the import of a painting. The message behind the painting may be very deep. Sometimes, in art galleries, some people pass the whole day sitting in front of one painting, trying to understand the message it wants to convey. Passersby wonder as to why such people are sitting there. They fail to note that what one can understand by carrying out a deep study of the painting, cannot be understood by just casting a cursory glance over it. In this connection, I will tell you of an intellectual, who has a deep relationship with this topic. But there is no time left. God willing, in the next sermon, I will try to cover the remainder of this topic.