

Allah – Dhul ‘Arsh:
(The Lord of the Throne)

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى
الْعَرْشِ ^{قَدًا}

“Surely, your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and then He settled Himself firmly on the Throne...” (7:55)

In this verse of Surah *Al-A'raf* () the Holy Quran declares that after creating the heavens and the earth, after creating everything that exists – living and non-living, Allah (*subhanaho wa ta'ala*) settled Himself on His Throne. And in Surah *Al-Mu'min* (), the Holy Quran further says:

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ

“His are the most exalted stations and attributes; He is the Lord of the Throne...” (40:16).

However, if we read the story of creation in the Bible, it is written in the book of Genesis that God finished the creation of the heavens and the earth and all the hosts therein in six days, and then *“He rested on the seventh day from all His work... And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.”* (Gen. 2. 2, 3)

Now, when we compare these two accounts -- one of the Holy Quran, and the other of the Bible, obviously these two carry very different implications: The Bible says that after finishing the work of creation God “rested”. It indicates as if God was fatigued and exhausted after finishing His work of creation! Therefore, to diminish this impression that God was fatigued, the Biblical scholars try to explain the words of the Bible that God “rested” by saying that God’s inactivity on the seventh day means that “He was satisfied with the work He had done.” *

***(See the Footnote of Gen.2.2 in NKJV Study Bible, p.6).**

However, differing with the Biblical account, the Holy Quran states that after completing the cosmic creation, God settled Himself on the Throne. And settling on the Throne clearly indicates that God was not fatigued or exhausted.

On the contrary, it means that God manifested His Majesty and Glory as the Sovereign of the Universe that He had created, and His awesome Power to sustain everything continued ceaselessly.

We all know that a throne is a seat on which a monarch sits to perform his stately functions, and he enforces the laws under his royal command and authority. A throne, therefore, is an important symbol of sovereignty, dignity and enforcement of a king's imperial power. That is the reason why the kings, queens and monarchs take special care to make their royal thrones look splendid and magnificent.

There are thrones that are famous for their elegance and splendor -- such as the Dragon Throne of the Chinese Emperors, the Phoenix Throne of the Kings of Korea, the Golden Stool of the African Ashanti Kings, and the Peacock Throne of the Mughal and Persian Emperors.

Not only do kings and queens use thrones as their seats of royal authority, power and glory, but some heads of religious organizations also utilize thrones to designate their priestly rule and authority over their followers in faith. For instance, some of the Catholic Bishops use thrones as their formal seats. A Bishop's primary church is called a Cathedral, and this name "Cathedral" is derived from the Greek word '*cathedra*' which means '*throne*'. The famous throne of the Pope as the Bishop of Rome and the head of the Roman Catholic Church is called '*Cathedra Romana*.' Similarly, the Dalai Lamas of Tibet used to sit on a throne called the Lion Throne.

A beautiful and magnificent throne is also mentioned in the Holy Quran, in Surah *Al Naml* that belonged to the Queen of Saba. It is written that Hazrat Suleiman () ordered to construct a throne that was even better and grander than the throne of the Queen of Saba. (REF: 27:24, 39, 42, 43.)

Later, Hazrat Suleiman (*alaihis salam*)’s famous throne became a legend, and it is said that it was made of ivory and was covered with gold, and encrusted with rubies, sapphires, emeralds and other precious stones that radiated dazzling and most fascinating hues.

(REF: CHABAD.ORG: PURIM – King Solomon’s Throne)

Thus, it becomes easy to understand that the use of the word *Al-‘Arsh* or “The Throne” in the Holy Quran is far more significant, and it has very special meaning -- different from that of the Biblical statement that God “rested” on the seventh day. The Holy Quran is very clear, as stated in *Ayat-ul Kursi* (2:256) that Allah (*subhanaho wa ta’ala*) never gets tired or exhausted: “*Slumber seizes Him not, nor sleep*”....“*His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth; taking care of them does not fatigue Him...*”

Now, let us try to understand what it really means that Allah is *Dhul 'Arsh* – () the Lord of the Throne?

Metaphorically speaking, the Throne of Allah means His ineffable Sublime Station that is far above and beyond everything that He has created.

Hazrat Masih-e-Maud (A.S) in his book *Chashma-e-Ma'rifat* () elaborates this point by saying:

پہلے تو تمام مخلوق حییٰ عدم میں تھی اور خدا تعالیٰ وراء الورا مقام میں اپنی تجلیات ظاہر کر رہا تھا جس کا نام عرش ہے یعنی وہ مقام جو ہر ایک عالم سے بلند تر اور برتر ہے اور اسی کا ظہور اور پر تو تھا اور اُس کی ذات کے سوا کچھ نہ تھا۔ پھر اُس نے زمین و آسمان اور جو کچھ اُن میں ہے پیدا کیا اور جب مخلوق ظاہر ہوئی تو پھر اُس نے اپنے تئیں مخفی کر لیا اور چاہا کہ وہ ان مصنوعات کے ذریعہ سے شناخت کیا جائے۔

“In the beginning, all creation was non-existent, and God Almighty was manifesting all of His grandeur at a station that is beyond anyone’s imagination. And that station is known as the Throne.

That is, the station which is higher and better than all the worlds. And there was nothing else except His Being, and it was His manifestation and reflection alone. Then, He created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. When all of His creation was materialized, He then concealed Himself, and desired that He should be recognized through His created works.”

(Chashma-e-Ma'rifat, Ruhani Khazain. Vol. 23, page 274.) (The Essence of Islam, Vol. 1, p. 58.)

In his book *Tasdeek-e-Braheen-e-Ahmadiyya* Hazrat Alhaj Maulana Nur-ud-Din, Khalifatul Masih 1st rebutting the objection as if God has a body, and He is sitting on a material throne, says:

“It is not a belief of the Muslims that ‘*Arsh* (or the Throne) is anything physical and created on which God is sitting. Read the Holy Quran in its entirety and you will find nowhere that God’s ‘*Arsh* or Throne is limited or something created. In the Holy Quran, Allah has repeatedly claimed that He is the Creator of everything that is substantive – having an entity. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the souls and all of their powers and faculties; and He exists on His own independently, and everything else is sustained by Him; and every particle that exists is His creation. But nowhere did He say that the ‘*Arsh* or the Throne has a physical body that He has created.”

Thus, Allah the Exalted being the Lord of the Throne means that Allah’s station is the Highest of the High. He is far above and beyond anyone’s imagination and comprehension, and that He exhibits His Majesty and His eternal authority through His creation. It means that remaining invisible from His created things; He continues to enforce His eternal laws to run the material and spiritual worlds. The ‘*Arsh* is the perfect manifestation of Allah’s attributes of *Jamal* and *Jalal* –

Of Beauty and Majesty. Thus His Sublime, Exalted, Holy and unreachable awesome station is called His ‘Arsh, His Throne.

For this very reason in the Holy Quran His Throne has also been called, as *Arsh-il-Azeem* () (9: 129),

***Arsh-il-Kareem* () (23:117),**

And *Arsh-il-Majeed* () (85:16)

That is, the Mighty Throne, the Glorious Throne, and the Throne of Honor.

The Holy Quran makes it further clear that to Allah *Dhul ‘Arsh* alone belong the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth:

In Surah *Al-Baqarah* (2:108), it is stated:

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مَلِكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ
وَلِيِّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

“Don’t you know that the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah alone? And there is no protector or helper for you besides Allah.”

The Holy Quran emphatically declares that Allah --The Lord of the Throne is the King upon Kings, He is the Sovereign of the Sovereigns:-

In Surah *Al-‘Imran* () the Holy Quran states:

“Say, ‘O Allah, Lord of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whomsoever You please; and You take away sovereignty from whomsoever You please’.” (3:27).

An important point to note is that Allah the Exalted has established a close relationship with all of His creation, especially with humans -- the best of all the creations (*Ashraf-al-makhlooqaat*) (REF: 95:5).

However, despite His close connection with His creation as their Creator*, and despite Him being nearer to man than his jugular vein**, Allah the Exalted still remains remote from all of His created things. That is why He does not appear in any visible material shape or image; and He certainly does not appear in any human form.

Unfortunately, there are some religions, and even some mystical schools of thought within Islam, that mistakenly believe in the doctrine that “Everything is God”. This dogma is known as *Hama Oost* () that is, there is no distinction between the Creator and the creation. But it is absolutely wrong to think that there is no difference between God and His creation. Actually, the true and valid doctrine is *Hama az Oost* () that is, Although Allah encompasses everything, nothing in itself is God, and all that exists is from God.

**(REF: 65:13; 2:87) ** (REF: 50:17)*

Another important point that needs to be understood properly is how Allah the Exalted as being the Lord of the Throne relates to our moral and spiritual righteousness and our good conduct. This special relationship is referred to in Surah *Hud* where it is mentioned that Allah's 'Arsh – or Allah's Throne is sitting upon water:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي
سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ
لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا^ط

“And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, --- and His Throne rests on water --- that He might try you which of you is best in conduct...” (11:8).

As we do understand that Allah's settling on the Throne is a metaphor, similarly, His Throne resting on water is also a metaphorical expression.

In the Holy Quran ‘water’ is mentioned not only as the most important source of the physical life on earth, but also the term ‘water’ is used as the most important source of our spiritual life:

In Surah *Al-Anbiya* (21; 31), Allah says:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ ط

“...And We made of water every living thing...”

Again, in Surah *Al-Furqan*, (25:55), it is written:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا

“And He it is Who has created man from water...”

Now, the scientific research and findings have made it evident that all forms of life depend on water which is in the oceans, lakes and rivers, and it descends on land from clouds in the form of rain, snow or hail. The rain water that comes down from above quickens and nourishes the earth that has been dry and infertile. In Surah *Ha Mim Al-Sajdah*, Allah says:

“And of His Signs is that you see the earth lying withered, but when We send down water on it, it stirs and swells with abundance of greenery. Surely, He Who quickens it, can quicken the dead also. Verily, He has power over all things.” (41: 40)

In the same manner, spiritual water descends from heavens in the form of Divine revelations, without which spiritual life is withered and cannot exist. Divine revelations descend on the hearts of the Prophets of God in great abundance to give spiritual life to mankind.

We also know that it was through obeying the Divine revelation that Hazrat Ibrahim () left his progeny in the barren, lifeless wilderness of Paran in Arabia, where the spring water of Zamzam gushed out, and later the town of Mecca developed around it -- a thriving town humming with life, and where the greatest life-giving Messenger of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad-e-Mustafa (s.a.w.s.) appeared to give spiritual life to entire mankind:

In Surah *Al-Anfal* () Allah says:

“O, ye who believe! Respond to Allah and the Messenger when he calls you, so that he may give you life, and know that Allah comes in between a man and his heart, and that He it is unto Whom you will be gathered.” (8:25),

Thus the Throne of God settling on water means that Allah grants us our spiritual life through Divine revelations, and asks us to drink deep from His revealed Scriptures, and to gain His knowledge and recognition through His Signs and attributes, and be fully satiated in this life and be successful in the Hereafter!

Another important thing to understand is the connection of Allah's Angels with Allah's Throne.

In Surah *Al-Haaqqah* () we read:

“So that when a single blast is sounded on the trumpet,

And the earth and the mountains are heaved up, and then crushed in a single crash,

On that day shall the great Event come to pass.

And the heaven will cleave asunder, and it will be very frail that day.

And the angels will be standing on its borders, and above them on that day eight Angels will bear the Throne of thy Lord.

(69:14-19)

Now, the question arises: What signifies that the Throne of the Lord shall be carried by eight Angels on the Day of Resurrection, and all other angels shall be standing around it?

To understand this subtle point, we have to know that the angels of Allah the Exalted are His agencies who bear and reflect Allah's attributes, working behind the scenes, and they execute Allah's Will on His command.

In the Holy Quran, two types of attributes of Allah are mentioned: First, *Tashbihi* () or "attributes of similitude" that have some apparent resemblance with human faculties and qualities. And the second, *Tanzihi* () or "transcendent attributes" that are unique to Allah alone and no one shares them to any degree at all, and no one else has any resemblance with Him in having these unique attributes.

In Surah *Al-Fatiha*, which is the essence of the entire Quranic teaching, the four fundamental *Tashbihi* or attributes of similitude are mentioned, namely, He is the Creator, the Gracious, the Merciful, and Master of the Day of Judgment, and around these four attributes all other Divine *Tashbihi* attributes revolve. And in Surah *Al-Ikhlās*, Allah's four fundamental *Tanzihi* attributes are mentioned; that He is One and Alone in His person, He is Independent and besought of all, He begets not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him.

Allah's Throne being carried by eight angels, and other angels standing around it -- means that it shall be through these eight fundamental attributes of Allah that all of His other attributes shall come into full light. And thus God's Glory shall be manifested completely on the Day of Resurrection when the present order of creation shall be totally consummated.

On that Day, God's Unity and all of His beautiful and superb Divine attributes shall be seen in their complete splendor and brilliance.

To summarize, Allah’s Throne is a symbolic expression that indicates His ineffable Sublime, Exalted, Holy, and unreachable station; and all Sovereignty of the Universe belongs to Him alone. His Laws are fully enforced under His domain. He encompasses all of His creation and yet He remains completely distinct from His creations. He is the Originator and Provider of life in all its forms – physical as well as spiritual, and He conducts all affairs of physical and spiritual universes through His governing Laws. And all of His sacred and awesome attributes whether Tashbihi or Tanzihi – of Similitude or Transcendent, and all His attributes of Jamal and Jalal – of Beauty and of Majesty -- shall be manifested to us in their full glory in the Hereafter.

In conclusion, let me read an extract from Hazrat Masih-e-Maud (A.S.) in Urdu from his book *Nasim-e-Da’wat*

() along with its translation:

اُس قادر اور سچے اور کامل خدا کو ہماری روح اور ہمارا ذرہ ذرہ وجود کا سجدہ کرتا ہے جس کے ہاتھ سے ہر ایک روح اور ہر ایک ذرہ مخلوقات کا مع اپنی تمام قوی کے ظہور پذیر ہوا۔

“Our soul and every particle of our being prostrates before the Mighty, True and Perfect God from Whose hand every soul and every particle of creation -- together with all its faculties -- came into existence.

اور جس کے وجود سے ہر ایک وجود قائم ہے اور کوئی چیز نہ اس کے علم سے باہر ہے اور نہ اُس کے تصرف سے اور نہ اُس کی خلق سے۔

And through Whose support every being is sustained. Nothing is outside His knowledge, outside His control, or outside His creation.

اس کی قدرت کیا ہی عظمت اپنے اندر رکھتی ہے جس کے بغیر کسی چیز نے نقش وجود نہیں پکڑا اور جس کے سہارے کے بغیر کوئی چیز قائم نہیں رہ سکتی۔

How majestic is His power that nothing comes into existence without His command, and nothing can continue to exist without its support.

وہ ہمارا سچا خدا بیشمار برکتوں والا ہے اور بیشمار قدرتوں والا اور بیشمار حسن والا۔ اور بیشمار احسان والا اُس
کے سوا اور کوئی خدا نہیں۔

*That True God of ours possesses numberless blessings,
numberless powers, numberless beauties and beneficences.*

There is no God besides Him.”

(Nasim-e-Da'wat, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 19, p. 363)

**May the Lord of the Throne always keep us in His loving care,
mercy and protection!**