

A Brief Discussion On The Arsh – The Throne Of Allah

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There are various opinions about Arsh and the words:

اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ

“He rose above the Throne” (7:54).

Some commentators opine that these words are among the symbolisms used in the Qur'an and we should refrain from debating about them. These are the commentators who are against crossing limits in discussion on the manifest book and Sunnah and consider it a Bida'h.

But the Qur'an and Sunnah enjoin people to ponder about them, to research upon their meanings and to understand them better. How can they ban such debates, and researches on such verses and proofs that are evident to the learned. We too will for the moment from discussing it.

Others however, have debated over the meaning of Arsh. They say:

- Arsh is that ninth stage of heavens,
- That surrounds the entire material worlds,
- And is called Atlas because there are no stars in it.

- This is the heaven that creates and fixes the time through its movements,
- And below it is the 8th layer of heavens,
- Which is the station of the fixed stars.
- Below this 8th heaven are the other seven heavens,
- Each being the station of the stars like Saturn, Mercury etc.

This idea cannot be termed as the explanation of the Qur'anic verses because in truth, Qur'an is compatible to the explanation of Bethlimus. Those who believe in this idea have explained the Arsh and the seven heavens in this context and those who find it against the Qur'an have refuted it. For instance, this assumption says that the limit of the creation is the ninth heaven and there is nothing existing beyond it. It then says that the movement of the heavens is permanent and unending each layer is connected with the other and all have been created from the same source. There is no gap or interlinking doors between them.

Contrary to this, the verse of the Qur'an and Hadiths speak of the screens between the Arsh and the lower heavens.

- They believe the Arsh to have pillars that are carried by certain carrier and indeed God will soon roll up the skies like a parchment.
- They say that in the heavens, reside creations similar to the angels and
- There is no space to step into it
- Because there are unlimited angels who are prostrating or bowing or are in some other form of obeisance to their Lord.
- The heavens have their doorways and near the Sidrat ul-Muntaha is Paradise to which

the deeds of men are taken.

- They are totally against those who believe in the limitation after the ninth heaven wherein they believe is the Arsh.

Their assumption is rejected because it is against the verses of the Qur'an and Ahadith.

We should not be perturbed for they and their ideas are not according to the Qur'an and Hadiths. It may be possible that the description of the Qur'an about the heavens is against it. They have drawn a limitation on the creation and have ignored the sayings of the Qur'an and the Hadiths.

- Actually, there is no physical existence of any Arsh,
- The words:

استوى على العرش

“He rose above the Throne” (7:54)

Or:

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى

“Rahman sat on the throne” (20:5).

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.

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