

LECTURE (2) ON  
**ARSH – Throne Of Allah**  
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Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

- We were discussing about the concept of Arsh.
- As you remember, we said that there are mainly four views found that could be found about the concept of Arsh.
  - ❖ One is the view that could not be found in the books written in the early stage of Islam by the companions of the Messenger. This is from the Mutashabihat and we can have no knowledge about such issues and just have to leave the knowledge of it to God. And, the explanation of it is just to believe in it without imagining anything about how this concept is or its qualities and properties.
  - ❖ The second view is attributed to the Mujassima from Islam, by those anthropomorphic, who believe that the throne is really a throne, although there are different properties of throne in this world. Allah is sitting on that throne and the throne carries Him.
  - ❖ The third view was that this is merely metaphorical and there is no reality in it. Allah wants to be known through His knowledge and power by such a thing as throne. The throne itself does not exist at all; it just signifies the knowledge and the power of God.
  - ❖ The fourth view is from the infallible Imams and their Hadith is that although it is metaphorical, but it is a metaphor for a reality it is figurative type of language. However, it signifies something in reality that exists and is a category of creation. These were the four main views.
- Today, we want to go to the traditions and discuss them from the point of view of what we have received from the Imams.
- Before we delve into the traditions, two things are important to notice.
- One is that this type of Riwayat could not be found from anyone but the Ahlulbait. These are the Riwayat that could not be found in books other than that of the Ahlulbait.
- The second view is that these Riwayat are highly figurative in language because those concepts could not be put in plain language. And only those people could take the benefits of these Riwayat; who have high understanding of the type of language the Imams use and secondly, the utmost benefit is given to those who have some sort of knowledge about these issues themselves.

- In fact the Imams are not throwing these Hadiths at anyone, or would not explain these Hadiths to just anyone or those who just came and asked.
- They have told these Hadiths to people who have high knowledge themselves and could understand the figurative nature of their language and could analyze what the Imams had said.
- I have chosen about nine traditions here and ofcourse I don't think we could go through all of them.
- Just to analyze a few of the Hadith about Arsh and this in a way concerns what Allama Tabatabai has mentioned about the concept of Arsh and the figurative language used and the reality behind it.
- Shaykh Saduq in his book al Tawhid mentions the chain of tradition that goes to Salman Farsi who was apparently present when the conversation took place between Amirul Muminin and Jasaliq Catholicus the head of the Christians at the time who had come to discuss such issues with Amirul Muminin.
- I know one of these Jasaliq confessed Islam after discussion with Amirul Muminin, but I do not know whether it is the same person or not but the conversation shows that this man had a high knowledge himself, and Amirul Muminin felt free to put forward the concept understood by the knowledgeable people to this man.
- A part of this Hadith is mentioned in *al Tawhid* and the full details are mentioned in Al Kafi which is reported from Mahasin al Barqi. And the Hadith is very famous in Shiite environments and the Hadith is reported by almost all traditionalists.
- Now in that Hadith from Tawhid, Amirul Muminin said to Jasaliq Catholicus Christian, *The angels carry the Throne.*
- The concept of course was apparently accepted by the Christians of that time although now the old creed and belief system has changed.
- The way Amirul Muminin spoke to him shows that he had an understanding of Arsh and he believed in it just as the Muslims.
- However he had the fixed view of Arsh and God sitting on it and the throne is carrying the laws. Of course Christians are more prone to this type of understanding of God as they believe in the incarnation of God and God coming in human form.
- They were more prone to this than the Muslims so he mentioned, *Arsh is not like what you imagine, like a throne as we see in this world, and it is something that could be defined. It is created and managed by God.*
- Now what I wanted to establish here is that although a figurative language is used in whatever we attribute to the Arsh it means that there is a reality that could be defined, created and managed by God. And you loan it only.
- In a sense it relies completely because it is owned by God and if He takes attention away from it, and it will vanish.
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- *It is not like God is sitting on the throne like us.* Of course the Qur'an mentions Istawa and not sitting, and it means to be over something and when God is over it, it means He owns and manages it.
- The same discussion as I said is mentioned in more details in Al Kafi, and the same Jasaliq Catholicus is mentioned.
- As I said that you will find none of the companions of the Prophet, and if you find any teaching in this vein then you will have to take the claim of Imam and Wilayah from Hazrat Ali.
- No one could ever go into such conversation in this manner except Hazrat.
- It is because of the knowledge that had been passed to him by the Prophet.
- Jasaliq had asked, *Tell me; is the Lord carrying the throne or is Arsh is carrying God?*
- The Imam said, *Of course, Allah is the one who carries the Arsh, the heavens and the earth and all that is in between them.*
- Now this concept of God carrying the Arsh is understandable for us.
- However Arsh means throne in our language, we think that throne is something on which God sits and that it carries Him.
- The whole heaven and the earth is inside the Arsh and it itself is carried by God.
- What do we mean by Allah carrying it?
- And then he mentioned, and of course all knowledge comes from the Qur'an. *Allah is holding the heavens and the earth so that they do not vanish and if He doesn't then they disappear.*
- Apparently this Jasaliq was very versed in the Qur'an and he knew about Arsh being mentioned in the Qur'an. He said, *Don't you have in the Qur'an saying that the throne will be carried that Day by eight beings and you say that Allah carries the Arsh? How can this be for there is contradiction here.*
- Since the man is going into the deeper aspects and more figurative language not understood by everyone, Hazrat Ali answered, *Allah has created the Arsh from four lights; a red light from which redness has come about. A green from which the greenery has come about. And a yellow light through which yellowness has come about and a white light from which whiteness has come about. And that is the knowledge that Allah has bestowed upon me. These are the lights that carry the throne for they are the lights of His Majesty.*
- What he is saying here is that there are two types of carrying; *one is how He carries the heavens and the earth.*
- We shouldn't think that He is something huge with two big hands and he carries them as orbs. When He says He carries them means they depend for their existence on Him; in fact their existence has come about from His Nur.
- The language here is figurative.

- When we say light it is something that repels darkness and whatever comes into existence comes into light. Again it is a figurative language.
- If you have utter darkness you can not see or distinguish but you can only distinguish through light between things.
- Now with respect to God there is utter darkness before the light of existence comes and shed lights on the existing beings and therefore it is from His light that everything exists and there are different categories and level of existence in this world.
- He mentions that light has different colors, not the worldly colors. but he uses figurative language to explain. These lights are mentioned in the Hadith of Meraj.
- The Prophet said, *I reached a level that I saw the green light. The green light is a level of existence of Malakut.* Here is a different aspect or level of creation. He said the two concepts of carrying - one is how humans carry something and, when Allah carries everything including the Arsh.
- But How?
- Your whole existence, your whole being is dependent on His existence and that is how He carries you.
- You are completely reliant on Him as you are holding on to Him and He is carrying you.
- This is the meaning of Allah carrying the heavens and the earth.
- And this is the meaning of Allah carrying the Arsh.
- It means - Hazrat Ali said, it is not a like a being sitting on something, it is that Allah is holding the existence of the universe and Arsh in His hands and they are completely dependent on Him. Him being over it means that Allah is carrying the throne.
- However, we said there are people that carry the Arsh, the light of His Majesty.
- It is not that Allah needs them to carry the Arsh.
- He has bestowed a big favor by putting the light into their hearts and therefore they are carrying the Arsh of Allah.
- This is what Hazrat Ali says, It is by this light and majesty that *He has made the hearts of the Muminin who carry the Arsh.*
- Then you can imagine whether they be angels or people.
- Hazrat says, they have become the carriers of the Arsh and they are enlightened.
- Everything that happens in this world is due to that light.
- Everything is decided at that level of light, and it comes to the Kursi, then comes down to the heavens and the earth.
- Everything that happens in this world is from this light.
- He is the life of everything and completely aloof, purified from what they attribute to Him.
- Now the Catholicus says okay you say that *God is not on the Throne or the heavens, so where are He?*