

LECTURE (3) ON
ARSH – Throne Of Allah
Shaykh Bahmanpour

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

- Continuing with the traditions that we were discussing about the Arsh.
- The recap of the traditions from the Imams who said, *Arsh is a category of knowledge of God which belongs to the state of creations of beings. Therefore, that category in which everything is decided about time, dimensions, qualities and properties etc. though not created as yet but it flows from the knowledge of God.*
- *And that is the unseen Arsh of everything.*
- *That is the arrangement God speaks about in the Qur'an, the unseen aspects of the heavens and the Arsh as what we see in the visible aspects of the universe.*

In these Riwayats the differences of Kursi and Arsh are mentioned.

❖ From Imam Jafar Sadiq we have,

Kursi is the apparent gate of the unseen from which every thing appears, and Arsh is the unseen that is not manifest, and in it are angels which create; although qualities and dimensions, properties that were not existent, of course, but is conveyed through the Kursi as it appears in this world.

And therefore when we talk about God we talk about Arsh, we talk about a category of creation which is original - everything comes out of it and the Riwayats call it the throne but it is not a place where Allah sits but He carries it.

And since every creation is made inside the Arsh, therefore everything including the universe, the seven heavens and the angels except for those around it are inside the Arsh.

One tradition I mentioned last week was very beautiful and I repeat that before the others. Hazrat Ali was asked about the distance between the Arsh and the earth and he said, *The time taken to sincerely say La Illaha Illallah and is the distance traveled by the person to the Arsh.*

It makes sense because if someone really understand the meaning of *La illaha Illallah*, that all these means are not working except through power of God; that is where the Arsh is and everything is created there without any means.

And then when it appears to us it appears through all these means that we see the chain of cause and effects. However, in that state of creation where Arsh is, the cause of chain of effect does not work anymore. The chain of cause and effect is created there by God. So everything is the work of God.

- There is another Hadith mentioned in Man La Yahzurul Faqih, Majalis and Sharaya of Saduq.
- Of course when we talk about Saduq and I think I have mentioned about it before some of his books are more reliable than others for two reasons.
- One is that in some of his books, he is very careful about the chain of transmission of Hadiths because it was a book that he has mentioned in the beginning as an unreliable book.
- In other books he did not mention, that so we might have to see some that are unreliable in transmission, so he did not mention it, or he mentioned it but he did not want those books as a point of reference for everyone.
- And secondly, not because of Saduq himself, but the people who have conveyed those books to us, they had more attention and access to those authentic books of Saduq rather than those other ones.
- So, may be something had happened in between when the books were being reported to us.
- Now, Man La Yahzurul Faqih is one of those books wherein he mentioned that he relied on the contents as authentic and also all Fuqaha paid great attention to it.
- So it is quite reasonable to say that when you study this book you should take the Hadiths there to be very serious.

- Now, here of course in this Hadith in Sharaya, Majalis and Man La Yahzurul Faqih, from Imam Sadiq; now before I mention, I warned you last week that these are very figurative and serious literature told to us in figurative language, because no other language could be used when they wanted to explain to us something that is completely hidden.
- Speaking about Arsh and Kursi that are completely hidden to us, therefore they use this metaphorical and figurative language.
- And when we read it, those of us who are stupid people we say okay Imam had said this literally, and then we come to very silly ideas about Arsh and Kursi. However those who are clever, they understand that this is a figurative language. They cannot use plain language because it is not possible to express these things in plain language. So specially this Hadith when we are going to have this in our minds that it is very figurative.

- He was asked why Ka'aba was called Ka'aba. He said,
 - *Because it has four sides.* He was asked why was it made in a square shape and not in another shape. He said,
 - *This is because it was made parallel to Bait Al Ma'mur which is also in a square shape.*
 - And, as we gather from the traditions, the angels, when they wanted to worship God they focused their attention to this place or something in heaven in the world of angels .
 - It is a place to us because we do not know what to call it.
 - So he said it is because it is parallel to Bait Al Ma'mur.
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- So he was asked why that Bait was in a square? He said,
 - *Because this itself was parallel to Arsh which is square in that shape.*
 - So they asked why is Arsh in a square shape?
 - He said,
 - *Because the word in which Islam is based is four and these are Subhan Allah, Alhamdulillah, Wa La Illaha Illallah and Wa Allahu Akbar.*
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- Now as I said this is purely figurative language.
 - There is no such square building beside God known as Arsh, because the Imams completely renounced any one thinking about such physical building for Arsh.
 - However here it says, it has four sides but not the physical sides that we think, these are four different concepts about God.
 - It actually mentions what we read in the Riwaya in other language. If we go through these four words which of course very easily said every day and we think these are ordinary words.
 - These are the most excellent type of prayer that any Prophet has ever mentioned about God.
 - Of course, all Prophets were given these types of prayers and they conveyed it to their people.
 - If we think about Subhan Allah, they say of course there is a lot of discussion about Subhan Allah and Allhamdulillah.
 - What is the difference between the two?
 - When we say Allhamdulillah, let us start from here - because it makes us easier to think about Subhan Allah, we praise the Lord and we praise Him why?
 - Because we see His work in this world so we connect Him here.
 - And we make Him somehow similar to those whom we know and to somehow praise Him.
 - We see His grace coming out visible for us so we praise Him.

- The sentence with which we all start our prayers after Takbir is *All praise is for Allah*
- When we say it we are connecting Him to this world, we are creating a link between Him and things which are physical and non physical, though limited, some of them are created through the time and have dimensions.
- But God is very aloof from and above all these things.
- When we say Alhamdulillah, somehow we make a relation between Him and His creation.
- And therefore we have to purify this.
- Although we say there is a connection and He has created these things but He is above all of them.
- He is not affected by them.
- Therefore this Subhan Allah is a mode of purification and it means Allah purifies Himself of all these things.
- He could not be defined by His creations though we understand Him through them, we praise Him for them; but He could not be understood through His creation.
- Whatever we understand by His creation is not God; He is above it.
- So, Subhan Allah is a word of purification for He is purified and distant from His creation.
- And although there is a link as well between His creation and Him, He has created all these things e.g. we talk about the wrath and mercy of God, we understand them through the mercy on His creation.
- He is merciful and has a wrath, He is forgiving He is has great forbearance.
- However, we should not think these are like the qualities found in human beings.
- His mercy does not come from the source of being impressed by happenings.
- His mercy is above all things.
- His mercy does not come from the type of influence put on Him by happenings and creations.
- Although we say, He is merciful; however, His mercy is not our mercy.
- It should be distinguished and differentiated.
- Among the Muslim mystics, Ibn Arabi has based all his philosophy on monotheism and understanding the unity of God.
- On the one hand we know the God through His creation.
- God works in His creation.
- His mercy and actions materialized in His creation.
- On the other hand we have to say He is above all these and cannot be understood and realized by His creation.
- So Subhan Allah and Alhamdulillah and why we say the latter before the former?
- Just to take the precaution what we are saying to praise Him.

- Be careful, you have to purify it first so that you do not fall into pitfalls comparing Him with His creations...
 - So first we say Subhan Allah and then we say Allhamdulillah.
 - Especially if you read the work of Ibn Arabi you will see it.
 - We are facing a lot of parables.
 - Because on the one hand He is working with His creation and on the other hand He is very distant from them.
 - This is the meaning of *If you go and disbelieve Allah is completely unaffected.*
 - Don't think you could ever affect God by anything you do.
 - It is Tanzih and you don't think He is ever affected by anything you do.
 - However, He doesn't like what you do though He does not like it.
 - Now, He doesn't like it means He is affected by it, but this means He has not created you to disbelieve and so He does not like it.
 - It is impossible if you believe then this is the way He has created you.
 - What He means here is of course that He has created you in a way that if you do not believe then you do not trust.
 - If you are grateful, God is pleased with you, but not in a way that it is state of heart or pleasure for He cannot be affected.
 - The meaning will be of course that if you are grateful He has created you in a way that you prosper.
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- So here Subhan Allah, and Alhamdulillah, and then La Illaha Illallah is when we mix this Tasbih and Tanzih.
 - I know this is very difficult to grasp, however, gradually after a while when we read the sayings of the Imams, we will know what they wanted.
 - It is very important.
 - The words of Imams are much more difficult and important than the words of the scientists of the physical world because they are the scientists of the spiritual world.
 - They are scientists of arranging them so to speak.
 - They speak about this and it is very difficult to understand.
 - We have to think a lot and compare a lot to go through them to find out what they mean to tell and to understand.