

آية الكرسي

Virtues &  
Explanation



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لَوْلِيِّكَ الْحُجَّةِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ صَلَواتُكَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آبائِهِ  
فِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ وَفِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ وَلِيًّا وَحَافِظًا وَقَائِدًا وَنَاصِرًا وَدَلِيلًا وَعَيْنًا  
حَتَّى تُسْكِنَهُ أَرْضَكَ طَوْعًا وَتُمَتِّعَهُ فِيهَا طَوِيلًا

وَهَبْ لَنَا رَأْفَتَهُ وَرَحْمَتَهُ وَدُعَاءَهُ وَخَيْرَهُ  
مَا نَنالُ بِهِ سَعَةً مِنْ رَحْمَتِكَ وَفَوْزًا عِنْدَكَ

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مَوْلَاتِنَا فَاطِمَةَ الزَّهْرَاءِ وَأَبِيهَا وَبَعْلِهَا وَبَنِيهَا وَالسِّرِّ الْمُسْتَوْدَعِ  
فِيهَا بَعْدَ مَا أَحاطَ بِهِ عِلْمُكَ

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## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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 ﴿٢٥٥﴾

There is no deity except Allah — the One, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting, upon Whom all other beings depend. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him; and He is never, even for a moment, unaware of the governance of the universe. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? Thus, the intercession of those who intercede — for those worthy of intercession — does not diminish His absolute sovereignty. He knows what lies before them and what lies behind them; the past and the future are alike before His knowledge. And none can encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills. He alone is fully aware of all things, and whatever limited knowledge others possess is but a ray from His infinite and boundless knowledge. His Kursī (Throne of authority) extends over the heavens and the earth, and preserving them does not weary Him. Exalted is His station, and immense is His greatness (255).

(Sūrat al-Baqarah, Āyat al-Kursī)

### Introduction

Sūrat al-Baqarah holds a distinguished and lofty rank among the blessed chapters of the Holy Qur'an, to the extent that in the luminous words of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF), it has been referred to as "Sayyid al-Qur'an" (the Master of the Qur'an). Among the verses of this blessed sūrah, verse 255 — known as Āyat al-Kursī — enjoys a unique virtue and an unparalleled station. In the narrations of the Infallible Imams (p), this noble verse has been described as "the chief verse of Sūrat al-Baqarah," the most virtuous verse revealed to the Prophet, and the greatest verse of the Qur'an. Many other merits of this noble verse have likewise been transmitted from them.

The exalted status and indisputable greatness depicted for this blessed verse in the statements of the People of Purity (p), together with the countless blessings that arise from its recitation, moved us to consult the exegetical sources and to reflect deeply upon the luminous words of the Imams of Speaking Qur'an (p), in order to present the virtues, explanation, and clarification of this noble verse — in the hope that, through attaining this radiant knowledge, we may partake of the blessings of this noble verse.

## Part One: The Virtue of the Verse

### The Virtue of Āyat al-Kursī, the Importance of Its Recitation and Perseverance in Reciting It — and the Recommendation to Recite It Before Sleep and After Prayer in the Words of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF)

#### Āyat al-Kursī: The Most Virtuous Verse Revealed to the Prophet

In Tafsīr al-‘Ayyāshī, it is narrated from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) that Abū Dharr asked the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH & His family):

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا أَفْضَلُ مَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ قَالَ: آيَةُ الْكُرْسِيِّ

“O Messenger of Allah, what is the greatest and most virtuous verse that has been revealed to you? “He replied: “Āyat al-Kursī.<sup>1</sup>”

#### Master of the Qur’an is Sūrat al-Baqarah — and the Master of Sūrat al-Baqarah is Āyat al-Kursī

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF) addressed Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), saying:

يَا عَلِيُّ... وَالْقُرْآنُ سَيِّدُ الْكَلَامِ وَ سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ سَيِّدُ الْقُرْآنِ وَ آيَةُ الْكُرْسِيِّ سَيِّدُ سُورَةِ الْبَقَرَةِ. فِيهَا خَمْسُونَ كَلِمَةً فِي كُلِّ كَلِمَةٍ بَرَكَةٌ

“O Ali... The Qur’an is the master of all speech; Sūrat al-Baqarah is the master of the Qur’an; and Āyat al-Kursī is the master of Sūrat al-Baqarah. Within it are fifty words, and in every word there is a blessing<sup>2</sup>”.

#### Āyat al-Kursī: The Greatest Verse of the Qur’an

It is narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF) that He said

إِنَّ أَعْظَمَ آيَةٍ فِي الْقُرْآنِ آيَةُ الْكُرْسِيِّ

Indeed, the greatest verse in the Qur’an is Āyat al-Kursī.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Effects of Reciting Āyat al-Kursī: Entrance into Paradise and Divine Protection — and Perseverance in Its Recitation as a Trait of the Truthful and the Devout

Amir al-Mu’minin (p) relates that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF) said from the steps of the pulpit:

<sup>1</sup> Tafsir al-Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 137

<sup>2</sup> Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 4, p. 336

<sup>3</sup> Tafsir al-Safi, vol. 1, p. 28

مَنْ قَرَأَ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ فِي دُبُرِ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ مَكْتُوبَةٍ لَمْ يَمْنَعْهُ مِنْ دُخُولِ الْجَنَّةِ إِلَّا الْمَوْتُ وَلَا يُوَاطِبُ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا صِدِّيقٌ أَوْ عَابِدٌ وَمَنْ قَرَأَهَا إِذَا أَخَذَ مَضْجَعَهُ آمَنَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَجَارِهِ وَجَارِ جَارِهِ وَالْأَيَّامِ حَوْلَهُ.

Whoever recites Āyat al-Kursī after every obligatory prayer, nothing prevents him from entering Paradise except death; and none persists in this practice except one who is exceedingly truthful (ṣiddīq) or a true worshipper (‘ābid). And whoever recites it when going to his bed, Allah places him, his family, his neighbor, his neighbor’s neighbor, and the surrounding homes under His protection<sup>4</sup>.

### Recitation of Āyat al-Kursī Equivalent to a Lifetime of Worship

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ قَرَأَ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ مِائَةً مَرَّةٍ كَانَ كَمَنْ عَبَدَ اللَّهَ طُولَ حَيَاتِهِ

The prophet (PBUH&HF) states: Whoever recites Āyat al-Kursī one hundred times is like one who has worshipped Allah throughout his entire life.<sup>5</sup>

### The Virtue of Āyat al-Kursī and the Importance of Its Recitation and Perseverance in It in the Words of Amir al-Mu’minin (p)

#### Āyat al-Kursī: A Treasure from Beneath the Throne — and Continuity in Its Recitation is the Practice of Amir al-Mu’minin (p)

Shaykh al-Tusi narrates in Al-Amali, through his chain of transmission from Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī, who said: I heard Ali ibn Abi Talib (p) saying:

فَلَوْ تَعَلَّمُونَ مَا هِيَ أَوْ قَالَ مَا فِيهَا لَمَا تَرَكَتُمُوهَا

If you knew what this verse (Āyat al-Kursī) truly is, or what is contained within it, you would never abandon it (you would never neglect it).

إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) أَخْبَرَنِي، قَالَ: أُعْطِيتُ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ مِنْ كَنْزٍ تَحْتَ الْعَرْشِ، وَلَمْ يُؤْتَهَا نَبِيٌّ كَانَ قَبْلِي

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF) used to say: “Āyat al-Kursī was given to me from a treasure beneath the Throne (‘Arsh), and it was not given to any prophet before me.”

فَمَا بَتُّ لَيْلَةً قَطُّ مُنْذُ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ) حَتَّى أَقْرَأَهَا

<sup>4</sup> Makarim al-Akhlaq, vol. 1, p. 288

<sup>5</sup> Uyun Akhbar al-Rida, vol. 2, p. 65

From the time I heard this from the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF), there has not been a single night in which I have not recited it.

ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا أَبَا أُمَامَةَ، إِنِّي أَقْرُؤُهَا ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ فِي ثَلَاثَةِ أَحْيَانٍ كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ

Then he said: “O Abā Umāmah! I recite it three times during three periods of every night”.

(Abū Umāmah said:) I asked, “O cousin of Muhammad (PBUH&HF), when do you recite it?” Imam (p) replied:

أَقْرُؤُهَا قَبْلَ الرَّكْعَتَيْنِ بَعْدَ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ... فَوَاللَّهِ مَا تَرَكْتُهَا مُنْذُ سَمِعْتُ هَذَا الْخَبَرَ مِنْ نَبِيِّكُمْ حَتَّى أَخْبَرْتُكَ بِهِ.

I recite it after the final ‘Ishā’ prayer, before the two rak‘ahs. By Allah, from the time I heard this from your Prophet until now that I have informed you of it, I have never abandoned it<sup>6</sup>.

### The Recitation of Āyat al-Kursī and Its Role in the Healing of Illness

In the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (p), in addition to the spiritual effects of Āyat al-Kursī, its healing effects have also been mentioned. Amir al-Mu‘minin (p) says:

إِذَا اشْتَكَى أَحَدُكُمْ عَيْنَهُ فَلْيَقْرَأْ عَلَيْهَا آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ وَفِي قَلْبِهِ أَنَّهُ يَبْرَأُ وَيُعَافَى فَإِنَّهُ يُعَافَى إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى

Whenever one of you complains of eye pain, let him recite Āyat al-Kursī over it, and let him have certainty in his heart that he will be cured and that health will return; for indeed, by the will of Allah the Exalted, he will be healed<sup>7</sup>.

### The Recitation of Āyat al-Kursī as a Means for the Fulfillment of Worldly and Hereafter Needs

Among the other blessings of reciting Āyat al-Kursī is the easing of affairs and the fulfillment of worldly and otherworldly needs. Amir al-Mu‘minin (p) says:

لِيَقْرَأْ أَحَدُكُمْ إِذَا خَرَجَ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ الْآيَاتِ مِنْ آلِ عِمْرَانَ وَآيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ وَإِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ وَأُمُّ الْكِتَابِ فَإِنَّ فِيهَا قَضَاءَ حَوَائِجِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

Let each of you, when leaving his home, recite verses from Āl ‘Imrān, Āyat al-Kursī, ‘Innā Anzalnāhu’ (Sūrat al-Qadr), and Umm al-Kitāb (Sūrat al-Fātiḥah); for indeed within them is the fulfillment of the needs of this world and the Hereafter<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 83, p. 125

<sup>7</sup> Makarim al-Akhlaq, p. 374

<sup>8</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 89, p. 263

## The Virtue of Reciting Āyat al-Kursī in the Words of Imam al-Sajjād (p)

### Protection of Life and Wealth and Repelling Satan

Imam Ali ibn Husayn Zayn al-Abidin (p) narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF) that He said:

مَنْ قَرَأَ أَرْبَعَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ أَوَّلِ الْبَقَرَةِ وَآيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ ، وَآيَتَيْنِ بَعْدَهَا وَثَلَاثَ آيَاتٍ مِنْ آخِرِهَا لَمْ يَرَفِي نَفْسِهِ وَ مَالِهِ شَيْئًا يَكْرَهُهُ وَلَا يَقْرُبُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ وَلَا يَنْسَى الْقُرْآنَ .

Whoever recites four verses from the beginning of Sūrat al-Baqarah, Āyat al-Kursī, the two verses after it, and three verses from its end, will not see anything displeasing in himself or his wealth; Satan will not approach him; and he will not forget the Qur'an<sup>9</sup>.

## The Virtue and Importance of Reciting Āyat al-Kursī in the Words of Imam al-ṣādiq (p)

### Āyat al-Kursī: The Summit of the Qur'an — a Means of Repelling Worldly and Otherworldly Harms and Elevating Spiritual Rank

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (p) stated:

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ ذُرْوَةً وَ ذُرْوَةُ الْقُرْآنِ آيَةُ الْكُرْسِيِّ

Indeed, everything has a summit, and the summit of the Qur'an is Āyat al-Kursī,

مَنْ قَرَأَ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ مَرَّةً صَرَفَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَلْفَ مَكْرُوهٍ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَ أَلْفَ مَكْرُوهٍ مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ... وَ إِنِّي لَأَسْتَعِينُ بِهَا عَلَى صُعُودِ الدَّرَجَةِ

Whoever recites Āyat al-Kursī once, Allah repels from him one thousand harms from the harms of this world and one thousand harms from the harms of the Hereafter... and indeed, I seek assistance through it for ascending the spiritual ranks<sup>10</sup>.

### Continuity in Its Recitation — A Trait of the Prophets, the Truthful, and the Martyrs

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (p) narrates from his noble father that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF) addressed Amir al-Mu'minin (p) and said:

يَا عَلِيُّ عَلَيْنِكَ بِتِلَاوَةِ آيَةِ الْكُرْسِيِّ فِي ذُبْرِ صَلَاةِ الْمَكْتُوبَةِ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يُحَافِظُ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا نَبِيٌّ أَوْ صِدِّيقٌ أَوْ شَهِيدٌ.

<sup>9</sup> Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 6, p. 250

<sup>10</sup> Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 396

O ‘Alī, hold firmly to the recitation of Āyat al-Kursī after every obligatory prayer; for none persists in it except a prophet, or a profoundly truthful one (ṣiddīq), or a martyr.<sup>11</sup>

### Recitation of the Verse as a Means of Security and Refuge in Divine Protection

In another narration from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (p), the recitation of Āyat al-Kursī after the obligatory prayers is described as a cause for the acceptance of worship and for attaining divine security and protection from harm:

وَقَالَ ع مَنْ قَرَأَ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ فِي ذُبْرٍ كُلِّ صَلَاةٍ مَكْتُوبَةٍ تَقَبَّلَتْ صَلَاتُهُ وَ يَكُونُ فِي أَمَانِ اللَّهِ وَ بِعِصْمَةِ اللَّهِ.

Whoever recites Āyat al-Kursī after every obligatory prayer, his prayer is accepted, and he is placed in the security of Allah and under the shelter of divine protection<sup>12</sup>.

### Reciting the Verse After Prayer as Protection from Harm

In another narration from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (p), it is reported that two brothers came to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH&HF) and said: “We intend to travel to Syria for trade; teach us what we should say (and do).” His Holiness said:

إِذَا أَوَيْتُمَا إِلَى الْمَنْزِلِ فَصَلِّمَا الْعِشَاءَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِذَا وَضَعَ أَحَدُكُمَا جَنْبَهُ عَلَى فِرَاشِهِ بَعْدَ الصَّلَاةِ فَلْيَسِّحْ تَسْبِيحَ فَاطِمَةَ عَلَيْهَا السَّلَامُ ثُمَّ لِيَقْرَأْ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ ، فَإِنَّهُ مَحْفُوظٌ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى يُصْبِحَ الْحَدِيثَ

When you enter your lodging, perform the ‘Ishā’ prayer. Then, when one of you lies down on his side after the prayer, let him recite the Tasbīḥ of Lady Fāṭimah (p), and then recite Āyat al-Kursī; for he will remain protected from everything until morning<sup>13</sup>.

### Āyat al-Kursī as the Greatest Name of Allah and a Cause for the Acceptance of Supplication

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (p) said to one of his companions:

أَلَا أَعَلَّمُكَ اسْمَ اللَّهِ الْأَعْظَمَ قَالَ اقْرَأِ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ وَقُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ وَ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ وَ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقْبَلِ الْقَبِيلَةَ فَادْعُ بِمَا أَحْبَبْتَ .

Shall I teach you the Greatest Name (al-ism al-a‘ẓam) of Allah? He replied, “Yes.” He said: Recite Sūrat al-Ḥamd (al-Fāṭiḥah), say: Qul Huwa Allahu Aḥad (Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ), recite Āyat al-Kursī, and

<sup>11</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 83, p. 24

<sup>12</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 83, p. 34

<sup>13</sup> Wasa'il al-Shi'a, vol. 11, p. 395

Sūrat Innā Anzalnāhu (al-Qadr); then stand facing the qiblah and supplicate with whatever you desire<sup>14</sup>.

### The Virtue of Reciting Āyat al-Kursī at the Time of Sleep and After Prayer in the Words of Imam Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (p)

#### Recitation at the Time of Sleep and After Prayer as a Cause of Strength of Heart and Protection from Harm

In narrations transmitted from the noble Imam al-Riḍā (p), the recitation of Āyat al-Kursī at two specific times — before sleep and after the obligatory prayers — is presented as a means of inner tranquility, physical protection, and divine safeguarding:

مَنْ قَرَأَ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ عِنْدَ مَنَامِهِ لَمْ يَخَفِ الْفَالِجَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَ مَنْ قَرَأَهَا فِي دُبُرِ كُلِّ فَرِيضَةٍ لَمْ يَضُرَّهُ ذُو حَمَةٍ

Whoever recites Āyat al-Kursī at the time of sleep will not, if Allah wills, fear paralysis; and whoever recites it after every prayer, no harmful creature shall injure him<sup>15</sup>.

### The Virtue of Reciting Āyat al-Kursī at the Time of Sleep in the Words of Ali al-Hadi (p)

#### Recitation Before Sleep as a Means of Fully Benefiting from the Night

In a narration from Ibn al-Riḍā, ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Hādī (p), the recitation of Āyat al-Kursī is mentioned among ten practices that the Ahl al-Bayt (p) consistently observed as nightly etiquettes before sleep:

لَنَا أَهْلُ الْبَيْتِ عِنْدَ نَوْمِنَا عَشْرُ خِصَالٍ... وَ نَقْرَأُ فَاتِحَةَ الْكِتَابِ وَ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ وَ شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَى آخِرِهَا فَمَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ أَخَذَ بِحِظِّهِ فِي لَيْلَتِهِ.

We, the Ahl al-Bayt, observe ten practices at the time of sleep: ... reciting Sūrat al-Ḥamd (al-Fātiḥah), Āyat al-Kursī, and the verse ‘Shahida Allahu annahu la ilaha illa Huwa’ until its completion. Whoever does so has indeed taken his full share of his night<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 90, p. 223

<sup>15</sup> Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 621

<sup>16</sup> Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 5, p. 116

## Part Two: Lexical Analysis and Exegesis of the Noble and Blessed Verse

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

### Grammatical Analysis (I' rāb)

Allāhu (اللَّهُ): The Divine Name (Lafz al-Jalālah); it is the muḅtada (subject), in the nominative case (marfū'), and the sign of its nominative state is the visible ḍammah at the end of the word.

Lā (لا): Lā nāfiyah li'l-jins — the particle of absolute negation (negation of genus).

Ilāha (إله): The noun (ism) of lā nāfiyah li'l-jins; grammatically in the accusative case (manšūb).

Illā (إلا): A particle of exception that is considered redundant here (istithnā' mulghā — not functioning as a true exception).

Huwa (هو): A substitute (badal) for the syntactic position (maḥall) of “lā” and its noun; it is built upon faṭḥ (mabnī 'alā al-faṭḥ) and is in the nominative position (maḥall raf'). The sentence “Lā ilāha illā Huwa” is in the nominative position as the predicate (khabar) of the muḅtada “Allāhu.”

Al-Ḥayyu (الحيّ): The second predicate (khabar thānī), and it is nominative (marfū').

Al-Qayyūmu (القيوم): The third predicate (khabar thālith), and it is nominative (marfū')<sup>17</sup>.

### Lexical Meanings (Mufradāt)

الله

The opening word of this blessed verse begins with the Majestic Name “Allah” — a Name that is both the proper name (ism al-dhāt) of the Divine Essence and the most complete and comprehensive Name of Allah, the Exalted.

This blessed word is repeated a total of 2,702 times in the Noble Qur'an. Grammatically, “Allāh” is in the nominative case because it functions as the muḅtada (subject), and the phrase “lā ilāha illā Huwa al-Ḥayyu al-Qayyūm” serves as its predicate (khabar).

The original form of this word was “al-ilāh/الإله”. Due to frequent usage, the second hamzah was omitted, and with the assimilation (idghām) of the first lām into the second, it took the form “Allāh.”

<sup>17</sup> I'rab al-Qur'an by Karbasi, vol. 1, p. 363

The word “ilāh” is said to derive either: From the root ‘-l-h (اله) meaning worship, or from the root w-l-h (وله) meaning bewilderment, astonishment, or intense longing. Accordingly, God is called Ilāh because He is the One worshipped and sought by all, and because human intellects become bewildered and astonished when attempting to comprehend the reality of His Essence.

Imam Hasan al-Askari (p) explains the Name “Allah” as follows:

فَقَالَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الَّذِي يَتَأَلَّهُ إِلَيْهِ عِنْدَ الْحَوَائِجِ وَالشَّدَائِدِ

Allah is the One toward Whom all turn in bewilderment and devotion during needs and hardships.<sup>18</sup>

Apparently, the word “Allāh (الله)” due to the predominance of its usage, came to function as a proper noun (‘alam) for the Most Holy Divine Essence. However, even before the revelation of the Qur’an, this Name was known among the Arabs, and the polytheists of the Age of Ignorance (Jāhiliyyah) were also familiar with it.

The Noble Qur’an clarifies this reality, stating:

وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ

And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say: Allah<sup>19</sup>.

Likewise, in another verse, the Noble Qur’an refers to the belief of the polytheists in dividing sacrificial offerings, assigning a portion to Allah and a portion to their idols, thus demonstrating their usage of the Name “Allāh”:

فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِرَعْدِهِمْ، وَهَذَا لِشُرَكَائِنَا

They said, ‘This is for Allah,’ as they claim, ‘and this is for our partners’<sup>20</sup>.

Among the proofs that indicate that the word “Allāh (الله)” is a proper noun (‘alam) and a unique name is that the Most Holy Divine Essence is described by all of the Most Beautiful Names (al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā) and by all the actions that proceed from those Names — yet the word “Allāh” itself is never used as a descriptive attribute for another name.

In other words, we say: “Allāh is al-Raḥmān” and “Allāh is al-Raḥīm,” but it is never said, “al-Raḥmān is Allāh” as a descriptive qualification of “al-Raḥmān.”

As seen in numerous Qur’anic verses, the Divine Beautiful Names are brought as attributes following the Majestic Name “Allāh,” describing the Sacred Essence:

<sup>18</sup> Al-Tawhid by Shaykh al-Saduq, p. 230 / Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 89, p. 232

<sup>19</sup> Surah Az-Zukhruf, verse 87

<sup>20</sup> Surah Al-An’am, verse 136

«فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ»<sup>21</sup>

«فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ»<sup>22</sup>

The same applies to actions: we say, “Raḥīma Allāh” (Allah showed mercy) and “Razaqa Allāh” (Allah provided)<sup>23</sup>.

Therefore, the word “Allāh” is the most comprehensive Name of God and the only Name that encompasses both the attributes of Majesty (jalāl) and Beauty (jamāl). Thus, we observe that in many verses, numerous of these Most Beautiful Names of Allah appear as attributes describing “Allāh”:

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْمَلِكُ الْقُدُّوسُ السَّلَامُ الْمُؤْمِنُ الْمُهَيَّمِنُ الْعَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾  
هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٤﴾<sup>24</sup>

Amir al-Mu'minin (p), in explaining the exclusive and unique designation of this Name for the Most Holy Divine Essence, says:

فَقَالَ إِنَّ قَوْلَكَ اللَّهُ أَعْظَمُ اسْمٍ مِنْ أَسْمَاءِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَهُوَ الْإِسْمُ الَّذِي لَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يُسَمَّى بِهِ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ وَ لَمْ يَتَسَمَّ بِهِ مَخْلُوقٌ

Indeed, the utterance ‘Allāh’ is the greatest Name among the Names of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic; and it is a Name by which none but God is worthy to be called, and no created being has ever been named by it<sup>25</sup>.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

In the sentence “Lā ilāha illā Huwa” (لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ), the word “lā” is of the type lā nāfiyah li'l-jins (the particle of absolute negation of genus), and this type of “lā” requires both a noun (ism) and a predicate (khabar).

Since the intended meaning of “ilāh” is anything to which divinity may truly be attributed, the omitted predicate (khabar maḥdhūf) of “lā” may be understood as “existing” (mawjūd) or a similar word such as “being” (kā'in):

«لَا إِلَهَ بِالْحَقِيقَةِ وَالْحَقُّ مَوْجُودٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ»

That is, there is no true and rightful object of worship existing except Allah

<sup>21</sup> Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 226

<sup>22</sup> Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 227

<sup>23</sup> Tafsir al-Mizan, Surah Al-Baqarah / Lisan al-Arab, p. 467 / Qamus al-Quran, vol. 1, p. 97 / Al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Quran, vol. 2, p. 307 / Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. 1, p. 12

<sup>24</sup> Surah Al-Hashr

<sup>25</sup> Al-Tawhid by Shaykh al-Saduq, p. 231

A noteworthy point is that the pronoun which, in the Noble Qur'an, refers back to the Majestic Name "Allāh" always appears in the nominative case, not in the accusative. For this reason, in this verse the expression "Lā ilāha illā Huwa" is used, and not "Lā ilāha illā iyyāhu." This itself indicates that "illā" here is not functioning as a particle of exception (but rather conveys restriction and exclusivity); for if it were a true exception, it would have been said: "Lā ilāha illā iyyāhu." Rather, the meaning of the phrase is: There is no deity except Allah<sup>26</sup>.

## الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

The Name "al-Ḥayy" is among the Divine Most Beautiful Names and is derived from the root ḥayāt, meaning life. This word, like other adjectival forms (ṣifāt mushabbahah), indicates permanence and continuity. However, life with respect to God is real and intrinsic life; for His life is identical with His Essence, not something accidental or additional to it.

As Imam Mūsā ibn Ja'far (p) states:

«كَانَ حَيًّا بِلاَ كَيْفٍ وَلَا أَيْنَ، حَيًّا بِلاَ حَيَاةٍ حَادِثَةٍ، بَلْ حَيٌّ لِنَفْسِهِ»

Allah does not require modality, location, or originated life (that He was once dead and then became living) in order to be Living; rather, His life is identical with His Essence.<sup>27</sup>

As for living beings within creation, their life is accidental and contingent; therefore, at one time they are alive, and at another they die. Divine life, however, is not like this. His life is eternal without beginning and everlasting without end, free from any form of annihilation or change. As the Noble Qur'an states:

«وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ»

And rely upon the Ever-Living who never dies<sup>28</sup>.

Likewise, Imam al-Bāqir (p), in explaining the reality of life in the Most Holy Divine Essence, says:

إِنَّهُ نُورٌ لَا ظُلْمَةَ فِيهِ، وَعِلْمٌ لَا جَهْلَ فِيهِ، وَحَيَاةٌ لَا مَوْتَ فِيهِ

Allah is a Light in which no darkness is found, and a Knowledge into which no ignorance enters, and a Living One into whom death does not penetrate.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Tafsir al-Mizan — Surah Al-Baqarah

<sup>27</sup> Kanz al-Daqa'iq wa Bahr al-Ghara'ib, vol. 2, p. 399

<sup>28</sup> Surah Al-Furqān, verse 58

<sup>29</sup> Tafsir Kanz al-Daqa'iq wa Bahr al-Ghara'ib, vol. 2, p. 399

Accordingly, complete life is that life which is not mixed with death and is not subject to decline or annihilation. Thus, true life is only that life which continues from eternity without beginning to eternity without end; and such life belongs exclusively to the Most Holy Divine Essence. As for human life — especially in this material world, which is intertwined with death — it cannot be considered true life. The Noble Qur'an states:

«وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌّ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ»

The life of this world is nothing but play and diversion, and indeed the abode of the Hereafter — that is the true life.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, as was mentioned in the grammatical section, in the verse under discussion — “Allāhu lā ilāha illā Huwa al-Ḥayyu al-Qayyūm” — it is more appropriate to consider the word “al-Ḥayy” as a predicate (khabar). That is to say, “Allāh” is the subject (mubtada), the sentence “lā ilāha illā Huwa” is the first predicate, and “al-Ḥayy” is the second predicate for the same subject, in order to convey exclusivity. In that case, its implied meaning would be “Allāh is the Living,” indicating that life belongs exclusively to Allah alone; and if other living beings possess life, it is Allah who has granted it to them.

However, the fundamental question is: what does “life” mean with respect to God? In its broad and true sense, life consists of knowledge and power. Therefore, a being who possesses unlimited knowledge and power possesses complete life. Accordingly, the life of the Most Holy Divine Essence means absolute knowledge and power.<sup>31</sup>

As for “al-Qayyūm,” it is an intensive form (ṣīghat mubālaghah) derived from the root qiyām (standing, subsistence). It refers to a being whose subsistence is by His own Essence, upon whom the subsistence of all other beings depends, and who, in addition, upholds and administers the affairs of creation.

Although qiyām in common usage means physical standing, since the Most Holy Divine Essence is exalted above body and bodily attributes, this meaning does not apply to God.

With respect to the Fivine Lord, qiyām means carrying out the work of creation, administration, and preservation; for He is the One who has created all the beings of the universe and has undertaken their governance, maintenance, nurturing, and development, and He continually upholds these affairs without any interruption. From this explanation it becomes clear that “al-

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<sup>30</sup> Surah Al-ʿAnkabūt, verse 64

<sup>31</sup> Tafsir al-Mizan — Surah Al-Baqarah / Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. 2, p. 260 / Qamus al-Quran, vol. 2, p. 213

Qayyūm” is, in reality, the root and foundation of all the Divine attributes of action. By attributes of action are meant those qualities that explain God’s relationship with the world of creation — such as creatorship, providence, giving life, guidance, and the like — all of which are encompassed within the concept of “al-Qayyūm.”

The Noble Qur’an also describes God’s upholding of creation as being based upon justice, meaning that His giving and withholding, His granting and preventing, all occur according to justice:

«شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ»

Therefore, “al-Qayyūm” means the One who subsists by His own Essence and upon whom others depend for their subsistence; He stands over everything in every respect, and His upholding is not mixed with weakness or deficiency. For this reason, Āyat al-Kursī continues:

Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep: لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

And no being other than God possesses such a mode of subsistence, except that in some way its subsistence ultimately returns to God and is by His permission<sup>32</sup>.

## Exegesis

Based on what was explained in the lexical section of the verse, it becomes clear that the construction of the sentence “Lā ilāha illā Huwa” is intended to negate the divinity of anything other than God; that is, it negates the godhood of those imagined deities to which the polytheists had attached themselves — not to establish the original existence of God. For the context of the verse is one that only requires the negation of false gods so that divinity may be restricted exclusively to the One Divine Essence, not that God’s existence must first be proven and then the divinity of others negated.

In other words, the verse seeks to strip divinity from all imagined objects of worship and confine it exclusively to Allāh<sup>33</sup>.

Lā ilāha illā Allāh” is the word of Tawhīd. It is tawhīd tanzīhī — meaning that unless we dissociate ourselves from everything that is regarded as a deity other than Him, and remove the false and usurping idols from our hearts, we do not attain the true meaning of “Allāh” nor do we enjoy

<sup>32</sup> Tafsir al-Mizan — Surah Al-Baqarah/ Tafsir Nemuneh — Surah Al-Baqarah

<sup>33</sup> Tafsir al-Mizan — Surah Al-Baqarah

being under the wilāyah of Allah. Thus, it begins with the negation of shirk (lā ilāha) and then the affirmation of Tawḥīd (illā Allāh).

According to the noble teachings of the Qur’an and its interpretations in narrations and hadiths, as well as in historical and practical manifestations, this principle — namely Tawḥīd in its exclusive and true sense — signifies nothing other than the wilāyah of Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (p), and the reality of shirk is association in the matter of the wilāyah of the Wali of Allah . Recognition (ma‘rifah) of the Imam, and affirmation of the Imamate and wilāyah of the Imams (p), is a divine matter that defines the boundary between “disbelief and faith” and between “shirk and Tawḥīd.” As Imam al-Ṣādiq (p) said:

مَنْ عَرَفَنَا كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا، وَ مَنْ أَنْكَرَنَا كَانَ كَافِرًا

Whoever recognizes us is a believer, and whoever denies us is a disbeliever.<sup>34</sup>

The Imam is appointed and chosen by Allah, the Most Glorious, and his wilāyah is the wilāyah of Allah. Therefore, whoever associates the friends (awliyā’) of ṭaghūt with the awliyā’ of Allah is committing shirk with respect to Allah<sup>35</sup>.

As in the interpretation of the noble verse:

«... وَ وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ \* الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَ هُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ»

...“And woe to the polytheists — those who do not give zakāh, and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.” (Surah Fuṣṣilat, verses 6-7)

Imam al-Ṣādiq (p), in response to the question of Abān ibn Taghlib — who was among his trustworthy students — regarding the meaning of this verse, said:

“Do you think that Allah demands the zakāh of their wealth from the polytheists?” “No, that is not so!” Then Abān asked, “Then who are the ‘polytheists’?” The Imam (p) replied:

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا بِالْإِمَامِ الْأَوَّلِ وَ هُمْ بِالْآئِمَّةِ الْآخِرِينَ كَافِرُونَ

[meaning] woe to the polytheists who committed shirk concerning the first of the Imams; and with respect to the other Imams, they are also disbelievers.<sup>36</sup>

In a passage from Ziyārat al-Jāmi‘ah al-Kabīrah, Imam ‘Alī al-Hādī (p), in describing the one who disbelieves in or associates partners in the wilāyah of the Pure Imams (p), says:

«مَنْ جَحَدَكَ كَافِرٌ وَ مَنْ حَارَبَكَ مُشْرِكٌ»

Whoever denies you is a disbeliever, and whoever wages war against you is a polytheist<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 187 / Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 32, p. 325

<sup>35</sup> Al-Ghaybah by al-Nu'mani, vol. 1, p. 130 / Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 373

<sup>36</sup> Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 2, p. 262 / Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 9, p. 233

<sup>37</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 99, p. 129

Thus, shirk in wilāyah is equivalent to shirk in Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, and shirk in Allah is shirk in wilāyah. Therefore, the inner secret (sirr and baṭn) of “Lā ilāha illā Allāh” is the wilāyah of Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (p).

As it is narrated from Imam Ali ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (p), in a ḥadīth qudsī, that Allah, the Exalted, declared the wilāyah of Amir al-Mu’minin ‘Alī (p) to be the secret of Tawḥīd and His fortified stronghold:

عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُوسَى الرَّضَا عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ عَنْ جِبْرِئِيلَ عَنْ مِيكَائِيلَ عَنْ إِسْرَافِيلَ عَنِ اللُّوحِ عَنِ الْقَلَمِ قَالَ يَقُولُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ: وَلَايَةُ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ حِصْنِي فَمَنْ دَخَلَ حِصْنِي أَمِنَ مِنْ عَذَابِي.

The Greatest Prophet (PBUH&HF) said: Jibrīl said to me that Allah says: The wilāyah of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (p) is My fortress; whoever enters My fortress will be safe from My punishment<sup>38</sup>.

In another narration, known as the ḥadīth qudsī of Silsilat al-Dhahab, our master ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (p) declared his wilāyah to be a condition of Tawḥīd:

اللَّهُ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ يَقُولُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ حِصْنِي فَمَنْ دَخَلَ حِصْنِي أَمِنَ مِنْ عَذَابِي ...

... Allah, Glorious and Exalted, says: ‘Lā ilāha illā Allāh is My fortress; whoever enters My fortress will be secure from My punishment...’

It is reported that when the Imam’s mount began to move forward, he called out to the people and said:

بِشُرُوطِهَا وَأَنَا مِنْ شُرُوطِهَا

(Entering the firmly fortified stronghold of Allah) has conditions — and I, ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (p), am among its conditions.<sup>39</sup>

The Imam states: I, ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā al-Murtaḍā (p), am a condition of ‘Lā ilāha illā Allāh.’ Therefore, “Lā ilāha illā Huwa,” which negates shirk and affirms Tawḥīd, is not realized except by the condition of the wilāyah of ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā al-Murtaḍā (p).

From this perspective, the noble verse — after declaring the negation of shirk and the reality of Tawḥīd, which on the inward plane is the wilāyah of Amir al-Mu’minin (p) — concludes with the description “al-Ḥayyu al-Qayyūm.” For shirk and disbelief in Allah — which is the same as shirk in the wilāyah of ‘Alī — are equivalent to non-existence and nothingness; whereas the believer

<sup>38</sup> Uyun Akhbar al-Rida, vol. 2, p. 136 / Ithbat al-Hudat, vol. 3, p. 34

<sup>39</sup> Al-Tawhid by Shaykh al-Saduq, p. 25

who has entered the firmly fortified stronghold of the ‘Alawī wilāyah, and whose heart has been illuminated by the Light of Allah, has attained the rank of true life.

For this reason, the Noble Qur’an describes the disbelievers and polytheists as “dead:”

الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ... امواتٌ غيرُ اَحْيَاءِ<sup>40</sup>.

The question that then arises is: in whose hand are this life and death, and how are they realized?

In Du‘ā’ al-‘Ahd, we address the Most Holy Divine Essence:

يَا مُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى، وَمُمِيتَ الْأَحْيَاءِ، يَا حَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

O Giver of life to the dead and Causer of the living to die, O Ever-Living, there is no deity except You.

He Himself is al-Ḥayy, the source of life, and the life and death of all beings are by His will.

However, according to the verses of the Noble Qur’an, this giving of life is by means of “water”:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ

And We made from water every living thing<sup>41</sup>.

وَيُنزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِيُطَهَّرَكُمْ بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ<sup>42</sup>.

But what is meant by “water”?

Imam Abi Ja‘far (p), in commentary on the noble verse above, states:

فَإِنَّ السَّمَاءَ فِي الْبَطْنِ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم) وَالْمَاءُ أَمِيرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ (عليه السلام)  
جَعَلَ عَلِيًّا مِنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فَذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُ وَيُنزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً  
وَأَمَّا قَوْلُهُ لِيُطَهَّرَكُمْ بِهِ فَذَلِكَ عَلِيُّ بْنُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يُطَهِّرُ اللَّهُ بِهِ قَلْبَ مَنْ وَالَاهُ<sup>43</sup>.

Therefore, what is meant by “water” is the wilāyah of Amir al-Mu‘minin ‘Alī (p); and what is meant by the sending down of water from the sky is the descent of the flowing water of wilāyah from the Muḥammadi heaven (PBUH&HF).

Just as in the realm of creation and formation, the descent of water causes the purification of the earth, so too the descent of the water of wilāyah upon hearts brings about their purification and revival. And whoever Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, wills to purify and revive his heart, He

<sup>40</sup> Surah An-Naḥl, verses 20–21

<sup>41</sup> Surah Al-Anbiyā’, verse 30

<sup>42</sup> Surah Al-Anfāl, verse 11

<sup>43</sup> aTafsir al-Ayyashi, vol. 2, p. 50 / Tafsir Furat al-Kufi, p. 153

grants him the recognition (maʿrifah) of wilāyah through the descent and outpouring of this water upon his heart.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, the earth and whatever is within it are made dead and brought to life by the permission of the Divine ḥujaj (proofs). And how beautifully Imam Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (p) said:

«نَحْنُ حُجَجُ اللَّهِ عَلَى خَلْقِهِ وَ فَاطِمَةُ حُجَّةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْنَا»؛

We, the Ahl al-Bayt (p), are the proofs of Allah over His creation, and our mother, Lady Fāṭimah (p), is the proof of Allah over us<sup>45</sup>.

Therefore, the revival and purification of the earth and whatever is within it take place by means of the flowing water (māʾ maʿīn) of wilāyah, which, by the permission of our Holy Mother (p), becomes manifest and operative in the world.

Accordingly, as has been stated, purity and cleansing are attained through entering into the Fāṭimī wilāyah (p), and by the permission of that luminous source of purity, purification is realized:

«لِنُبَشِّرَ أَنْفُسَنَا بِأَنَّآ قَدْ طَهَّرْنَا بِوِلَايَتِكَ يَا مَوْلَانَا يَا فَاطِمَةَ (سَلَامُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا)»

Let us give glad tidings to ourselves that we have been purified through your wilāyah, O our Lady, O Fāṭimah (p).

Thus, the believers who have revived their souls through the water of wilāyah — their reward is the enjoyment of the reality of the ḥayāt ṭayyibah (pure life), namely the sacred existence of the Imam, and being granted sustenance in the presence of their Lord.

أَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ<sup>46</sup>

“Anna al-kāfirīna lā mawlā lahum, Indeed, the disbelievers have no guardian.”

Meaning: the one who has taken “lā” as his walī — that is, non-being, emptiness, and mirage — has not partaken of the reality of existence. And since he has preferred non-existence over existence, when realities are unveiled, his ultimate end will be non-existence — that is, death and annihilation.

<sup>44</sup> Asrar Al Muhammad, vol. 2, p. 859

<sup>45</sup> Awalim al-Ulum, vol. 11, p. 1030

<sup>46</sup> Surah Muḥammad, verse 11

Thus, the one who has carried upon himself the reality of “ẓulm or oppression” — meaning the wilāyah of the ẓāghūt of the Ummah— on the Day when all faces bow down before the al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm, humbled and subdued, will suffer absolute loss, as the Noble Qur’an states:

«وَعَنْتَ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْمًا»<sup>47</sup>

And all faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting; and indeed, ruined is the one who carried injustice.

At that time, only that which was connected to the Sacred Face of Allah (Wajh Allāh) (p) will partake of permanence and life in proportion to that connection for:

«كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ وَيَبْقَى وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ»<sup>48</sup>

On the day when the Qā’im of the family of Muḥammad (may our souls be sacrificed for Him) rises, He will bring forth from their graves those two embodiments of non-existence and the root of all evil — the jibt and the ẓāghūt of the Ummah— and return them to non-being and annihilation. As we recite in the ziyārah of Abā al-Imām al-Muntazar (p) in the cellar of occultation:

«أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ حَيٌّ لَا تَمُوتُ، حَتَّى تُبْطِلَ الْجِبْتَ وَالطَّاغُوتَ»

I bear witness that you are living and do not die, until you abolish the jibt and the ẓāghūt.

“Al-Qā’im” is among the well-known titles of Ḥaḍrat Baqiyyatallāh al-A’ẓam (may Allah hasten His appearance). It is narrated that during the Mi’rāj of the Prophet (PBUH&HF), when the sacred beings of the Imams (p) were shown to Him, Ḥaḍrat Ḥujjat Allāh al-Qā’im (p) was standing among them in prayer, shining like a radiant star.

الحجة القائم كأنه كوكب دري في وسطهم [قيامًا يصلون]

Then the Most Holy Divine Essence said:

«وَهَذَا الْقَائِمُ الَّذِي يُجِلُّ حَلَالِي وَيُحَرِّمُ حَرَامِي وَبِهِ أَنْتَقِمُ مِنْ أَعْدَائِي»

This is the Qā’im who will declare lawful what I have made lawful and unlawful what I have made unlawful, and through him I will take vengeance upon My enemies<sup>49</sup>.

«السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ»

Peace be upon you when you rise.

<sup>47</sup> Surah Tā Hā, verse 111

<sup>48</sup> Surah Ar-Raḥmān, verses 26–27

<sup>49</sup> Awalim al-Ulum wa al-Ma’arif, vol. 1, p. 44

## لَا تَأْخُذْهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ

### Grammatical Analysis (I' rāb)

Lā (لا): A particle of negation.

Ta' khudhuhu (تَأْخُذْهُ): A present-tense verb (fi'l muḍāri') in the nominative state (marfū'), and the sign of its nominative case is the visible ḍammah at the end of the verb. The attached pronoun “hu” is a connected pronoun (ḍamīr muttaṣil), built upon ḍamm, in the accusative position as the direct object (meaning: “Him”).

Sinatun (سِنَّةٌ): The subject (fā'il), nominative (marfū'), and the sign of its nominative case is the visible ḍammah at the end of the word. The negated sentence “lā ta' khudhuhu sinah” functions in the nominative position as the fourth predicate (khabar) of the subject.

Wa lā nawmun (وَلَا نَوْمٌ): The wāw is a conjunction particle (ḥarf 'atf), lā is a particle of emphatic negation, and nawm is conjoined (ma'tūf) to sinatun, nominative (marfū'), with the sign of the visible ḍammah at the end of the word<sup>50</sup>.

### Lexical Meanings (Mufradāt)

## سِنَّةٌ وَ نَوْمٌ

The word “sinah” (سِنَّةٌ) — with a kasrah on the sīn — is derived from the root wasan and means bodily slackness at the beginning of sleep; in other words, light sleep or drowsiness. In contrast, “nawm” means complete sleep — a state in which most of a person's senses cease to function.

In reality, sinah is the kind of sleep that first overtakes the eyes; but when this state intensifies and reaches the heart, it is called nawm.

Accordingly, the noble phrase “Lā ta' khudhuhu sinatun wa lā nawm” emphasizes the being of Allah as al-Ḥayy and al-Qayyūm; for absolute standing over and governing the order of existence is meaningful only if no form of heedlessness — not even for a single moment — can affect it. Therefore, anything incompatible with the Divine Qayyūmiyyah is necessarily negated from His Sacred Essence; even the slightest cause of weakness, such as light sleep, has no place in His Pure Being.

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<sup>50</sup> I'rab al-Qur'an by Karbasi

Therefore, the meaning is that not only does drowsiness — which is the weaker factor — not overcome Him nor suspend His Qayyūmiyyah, but even the stronger state, which is sleep, does not overcome Him<sup>51</sup>.

## Exegesis

This part of the verse — which comes after “Huwa al-Ḥayyu al-Qayyūm” — is itself a clear expression of tawḥīd tanzīhī; that is, it proclaims that the Most Holy Divine Essence is free from every form of deficiency and imperfection. It declares that there is no deity except the One God — the true Living One, whose subsistence is by His own Essence, and upon whom all beings depend for their existence and standing.

Then, in order to emphasize this absolute Qayyūmiyyah, it adds that neither light sleep nor deep sleep ever overtakes Him; meaning that the continuous governance of the universe is never accompanied, even for a single moment, by heedlessness or weakness.

Regarding the occasion of revelation of this portion of Āyat al-Kursī, it is narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq (p) that he said: The Jews claimed that after the Lord completed the creation of the heavens and the earth, He sat upon the Throne — a sitting similar to that of a human being for rest. Thereupon, Allah, the Exalted, revealed this verse:

«اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ، لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ»

Meaning that Allah is al-Ḥayy and al-Qayyūm; He is neither overtaken by drowsiness nor by sleep, and He never sits in a manner resembling His creatures for comfort or rest<sup>52</sup>.

Likewise, in a supplication narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq (p), it is said:

وَأَنْتَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُكَ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

And You are the Living, the Ever-Subsisting; neither drowsiness overtakes You nor sleep. Glory be to my Lord, the Lord of the worlds<sup>53</sup>.

This passage is a renewed emphasis on the truth of “Allāhu lā ilāha illā Huwa al-Ḥayyu al-Qayyūm” — a God upon whom the subsistence of all beings depends, in whose hand are their life and death, and whose governance of the universe never departs, even for a moment, from the

<sup>51</sup> Tafsir Nemuneh — Surah Al-Baqarah / Tafsir al-Mizan — Surah Al-Baqarah / Javami' al-Jami', vol. 1, p. 139

<sup>52</sup> Tafsir al-Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 137

<sup>53</sup> Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 538

sphere of His knowledge and encompassing power. “Lā ta’ khudhuhu sinatun wa lā nawm” — and He is not heedless of them even for an instant.

However, Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, has entrusted the execution and administration of Divine commands to the possessors and masters of the affair — namely, the Ma’šūmīn (p). For this reason, in many verses of the Noble Qur’an, the agency of actions is attributed to Allah, the Exalted, in the plural form “naḥnu” (the royal “We”).

وَأَنَا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوَارِثُونَ<sup>54</sup>  
أَنَا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِنَّا الْمَصِيرُ<sup>55</sup>

Amir al-Mu’minin (p), in the sermon known as al-Ṭāriq, in explaining the station and virtues of the Imam *qua* Imam, states:

الامام خليفة الله في نهيه و امره... ولأهم الله أمر مملكته.<sup>56</sup>

“Allah entrusted to them the affairs of His dominion (ولأهم الله أمر مملكته).” The delegation of authority from the Most Holy Divine Essence to the Imam as Imam is in an absolute sense. Just as the Exalted Lord is described as “Lā ta’ khudhuhu sinatun wa lā nawm,” this reality also applies to the possessors of authority (p). In other words, the Command (al-amr), which is in the hand of the Most Holy Divine Essence, has been absolutely entrusted to the Imam as Imam. That is, not only is their command the command of Allah and their prohibition the prohibition of Allah, but the very existence of the Imam is itself the “Divine Command,” and they are the executors of Divine commands by the permission of Allah.

Under the chapter “The Necessity of the Ḥujjah and that the Earth is Never Without a Ḥujjah,” it is narrated from ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn (p) that he said:

نَحْنُ أئِمَّةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ... وَنَحْنُ الَّذِينَ بِنَا يُمَسِّكُ اللَّهُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ وَبِنَا يُمَسِّكُ الْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِأَهْلِهَا وَبِنَا يُنْزِلُ الْعَيْثَ وَبِنَا يَنْشُرُ الرَّحْمَةَ وَيُخْرِجُ بَرَكَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَوْ لَا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنَّا لَسَاخَتْ بِأَهْلِهَا

We are the Imams of the Muslims... and it is through us that Allah holds the heaven lest it fall upon the earth except by His permission; and through us He holds the earth lest it shake with its inhabitants and swallow them; and through us He sends down rain, spreads mercy, and brings

<sup>54</sup> Surah Al-Hijr, verse 23

<sup>55</sup> Surah Qāf, verse 43

<sup>56</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 169

forth the blessings of the earth. And were it not for that Divine Ḥujjah from among us who is upon the earth, the earth would swallow its inhabitants<sup>57</sup>.

Ḥaḍrat Baqīyatallāh al-A‘zam (may Allah hasten His reappearance) says in His blessed tawqī‘ addressed to Shaykh al-Mufīd:

إِنَّا غَيْرُ مُهْمِلِينَ لِمُرَاعَاتِكُمْ وَلَا نَاسِينَ لِذِكْرِكُمْ وَلَا نُوَلِّوْا ذَلِكَ لَنْزَلِ بِكُمْ اللَّأْوَاءَ وَاصْطَلَمَكُمُ الْأَعْدَاءَ

Indeed, we are not negligent in caring for you, nor do we forget your remembrance; and were it not so, hardships would descend upon you and your enemies would destroy you<sup>58</sup>.

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ

### Grammatical Analysis (I‘rāb)

Lahu (لَهُ): A جار و مجرور construction (the lām is a preposition). It functions as a preceding predicate (khabar muqaddam), since “lahu” comes before the subject (mubtada), which is “mā fī al-samāwāt.”

Mā (مَا): A relative pronoun (ism mawṣūl), built upon sukūn (it does not take inflection), and in the nominative position as a delayed subject (mubtada‘ mu‘akhkhar), since it comes after the predicate.

Fī al-samāwāt (فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ): A prepositional phrase (جار و مجرور) attached to an omitted clause serving as the relative clause (ṣilah al-mawṣūl); and the relative clause itself has no grammatical position. The entire nominal sentence functions collectively as the fifth predicate in the nominative position.

Wa mā (وَ مَا): The wāw is a conjunction particle, and mā is a relative pronoun conjoined to the previous clause.

Fī al-ard (فِي الْأَرْضِ): A prepositional phrase attached to the omitted relative clause (ṣilah) of the pronoun<sup>59</sup>.

### Lexical Meaning / Exegesis

This portion of the noble verse is, in reality, the fifth attribute among the Divine attributes mentioned in Āyat al-Kursī; for before it, there was reference to Tawḥīd, to His being al-Ḥayy and al-Qayyūm, and to the fact that neither drowsiness nor sleep overcomes His Sacred Essence.

<sup>57</sup> Al-Amali by Shaykh al-Saduq, p. 186

<sup>58</sup> Kitab al-Mazar by Shaykh al-Mufid, p. 8

<sup>59</sup> I‘rab al-Qur‘an by Karbasi

In truth, this ownership is a direct result of that Divine Qayyūmiyyah; because when the standing over the governance of the universe, the administration of existence, and the very principle of creatorship are exclusive to His Most Holy Essence, then the true ownership of all beings naturally belongs to Him as well. Thus, whatever a human being possesses and benefits from is not his true property; rather, it is a trust placed at his disposal for a limited time and under specific conditions (such as prescribed rulings for various matters) by the Real Owner. In this way, ordinary owners are obligated to fully observe the conditions set by the True Owner; otherwise, their ownership is invalid and their use unauthorized.<sup>60</sup>

As was mentioned previously, Allah, the Exalted, has entrusted the execution and administration of His commands to the possessors and masters of His affair. Accordingly, the ownership of the heavens and the earth, following this entrustment, rests in the Divine Hand of the possessors of authority (p) .

صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ

The path of Allah — to whom belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Indeed, to Allah all matters return.<sup>61</sup>

In the interpretation of this noble verse, it is narrated from Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (p) that he said:

...أَنَّهُ جَعَلَ عَلِيًّا (عَلِيهِ السَّلَامُ) خَازِنَهُ عَلَى مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَاتَّخَذَهُ عَلَيْهِ أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ .

Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, appointed Amir al-Mu'minin 'Alī (p) as the treasurer of all that is in the heavens and the earth, and made him His trustee. Know that all matters return to Allah.<sup>62</sup>

The same God who is the true Owner of all that exists in the heavens and the earth willed that the guardianship of this immense dominion be entrusted to Amir al-Mu'minin (p) — the Commander of those in the heaven and the Commander of those on the earth. And in conclusion, Imam al-Bāqir (p) explicitly states that this station is also by Divine permission, and that the source of all affairs is the Most Holy Essence of the Lord:

أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ

Indeed, to Allah all matters return.

<sup>60</sup> Tafsir Nemuneh — Surah Al-Baqarah

<sup>61</sup> Surah Ash-Shūrā, verse 53

<sup>62</sup> Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Quran, vol. 4, p. 838 / Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 26, p. 108

The complete and perfect manifestation of this reality in the outward realm will be realized in the era of the rising of the Qā'im (may Allah hasten His reappearance), when all the heavens and the earth will be humbled and submissive before the absolute Divine Wali. As the Noble Qur'an states:

أَفَعَيَّرَ دِينَ اللَّهِ يَبْعُونَ وَ لَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ طَوْعاً وَ كَرْهاً وَ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ<sup>63</sup>.

Do they seek other than the religion of Allah, while to Him has submitted whoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they shall be returned?

It is narrated in the interpretation of this verse that a narrator asked the Imam (p) about the phrase “wa lahu aslama man fi al-samāwāti wa al-arḍi ṭaw'an wa karhan.” The Imam replied:

قال: أنزلت في القائم عليه السلام

This verse was revealed concerning the Qā'im (p)<sup>64</sup>.

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ

### Grammatical Analysis (I' rāb)

Man dhā (مَنْ ذَا):

Man is an interrogative pronoun (ism istifhām), built upon sukūn, and in the nominative position as the subject (mubtada').

Dhā is a demonstrative noun, built upon sukūn, and in the nominative position as the predicate (khabar).

It is also permissible to consider “man dhā” together as a single interrogative expression functioning as the subject, with “aladhī” serving as its predicate.

Alladhī (الَّذِي):

A relative pronoun (ism mawṣūl), built upon sukūn, in the nominative position as a substitute (badal) or appositional clarification ('aṭf bayān).

Yashfa'u (يَشْفَعُ):

A present tense verb (fi'l muḍāri') in the nominative state, marked by the visible ḍammah at its end. Its subject is a hidden pronoun (ḍamīr mustatir) meaning “he.”

The clause “yashfa'u” is the relative clause (ṣilah al-mawṣūl) and has no grammatical position. The omitted referent of the pronoun is the same hidden subject.

<sup>63</sup> Surah Āl 'Imrān, verse 83

<sup>64</sup> Tafsiir al-Ayyashi, vol. 1, p. 183

‘Indahu (عنده):

An adverb of place (ẓarf makān) in the accusative case, attached to “yashfa‘u,” or related to an omitted element functioning as a circumstantial qualifier (ḥāl).

Illā (إلا):

A particle of exception that is considered redundant here (not a true exception).

Bi-idhnihi (بإذنه):

Bā’ is a preposition.

Idhn is a noun governed by the preposition and in construct (muḍāf).

Hī is a connected pronoun built upon kasrah, in the genitive position as the possessive complement (muḍāf ilayh).

Thus, “bi-idhnihi” is a prepositional phrase attached to an omitted element functioning as a circumstantial qualifier (ḥāl)<sup>65</sup>.

## Lexical Meaning

The word “shafā‘ah” (intercession) comes from the root sh-f-‘ (شَفَعَ) meaning “pair” or “making something even,” and it stands opposite to “watr” (وَتْرٌ), which means “single, odd, and alone.” In its original sense, the term denotes the joining of a superior and more powerful being to a weaker person in order to support and assist him. In common usage and in religious discourse, however, it is employed in two distinct meanings:

First: intercession in the popular understanding. What is meant here is that an intercessor—relying on social standing, personal influence, or a special rank—seeks to alter the decision of an authority regarding the punishment of subordinates. This conception of intercession has no place within tawḥīdic (monotheistic) reasoning and doctrinal theology, because God does not err such that His judgment would need revision; He is not subject to human emotions that could be stirred; He is not swayed by anyone’s influence; and His system of reward and punishment is not founded on anything other than justice.

But the second meaning of intercession is based on a transformation in the condition of the one for whom intercession is sought. In other words, a person—by providing the necessary prerequisites—moves out of an undesirable state deserving punishment, and through forming a bond with the intercessor, places himself in a position that becomes worthy of mercy and forgiveness. Intercession in Islamic teaching is of this latter kind <sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> I’rab al-Qur’an by Karbasi

<sup>66</sup> Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. 1, p. 224

The issue of intercession is expressed in the Qur'anic verses in various ways <sup>67</sup>.

1. Verses that categorically deny “independent” intercession:

«أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةَ وَلَا شَفَاعَةَ»<sup>68</sup>

“Believers, spend of what We have given you before that Day arrives when there shall be neither trade, nor friendship, nor intercession. It is the unbelievers who are the harmdoers.”

And also:

«وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ»<sup>69</sup>

And no intercession will be accepted from it.

2. Intercession by God Himself:

مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ<sup>70</sup>

You have no guardian nor intercessor other than Him.

3. Intercession by God's permission:

As stated in Āyat al-Kursī:

«مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ»

4. Intercession for one who has a covenant with God:

«لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا»<sup>71</sup>

5. Intercession for the one with whom God is pleased:

According to this verse, the intercession of intercessors benefits only those who have reached the rank of irtidā<sup>3</sup>—(ارتضاء) that is, those accepted in the presence of God:

لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَى<sup>72</sup>

Their intercession shall not benefit until Allah gives permission to whom He will and is pleased.

It was asked of Imam Mūsā al-Kāzīm (p): How can intercession apply to those who commit major sins, when God says:

«وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَى»

They intercede for none except for him whom He is well pleased

<sup>67</sup> Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 1, p. 154 / Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. 1, p. 227

<sup>68</sup> Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 254

<sup>69</sup> Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 48

<sup>70</sup> Surah As-Sajdah, verse 4

<sup>71</sup> Surah Maryam, verse 87

<sup>72</sup> Surah An-Najm, verse 26

And it is clear that someone who commits major sins is not among those with whom God is pleased. The Imam (p) replied:

Any believer who falls into a sin naturally feels remorse, and the Messenger of God (PBUH&HF) said: “Remorse over sin is repentance.” Therefore, such a person does not leave the realm of faith because of this remorse. But the one who does not feel remorse over his sin is not a true believer; intercession will not include him, and his action is an instance of *ẓulm* (wrongdoing). And God says about the wrongdoers that they have neither any helper nor any intercessor<sup>73</sup>.

This narration clearly shows that the primary condition for the acceptance of intercession is possessing a kind of faith that brings the offender to the stage of remorse, moral self-reform, and making amends.

In the book *al-Kāfi*, it is reported from Imam al-Ṣādiq (p) that, in a letter addressed to his companions, he wrote:

«مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ تَنْفَعَهُ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ، فَلْيَطْلُبْ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَرْضَى عَنْهُ»

Whoever wishes that the intercession of the intercessors in the presence of God should benefit him, let him seek from God that He be pleased with him<sup>74</sup>.

Therefore, the verses that negate intercession are in fact denying independent intercession—that is, any intercession conceived as operating apart from God’s permission and will. The intent of these verses is that no intercession is realized without God’s authorization, as stated in the preceding verses.

Even in those divine decrees that appear, outwardly, to be definitive and final God has nonetheless preserved His own will, as the Noble Qur’an states:

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُّوا فِي النَّارِ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ، خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِمَا يُرِيدُ، وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعَدُوا فِي الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرَ مَجْدُودٍ<sup>75</sup>.

The wretched shall be (cast) in the Fire where they will moan and sigh, and there they shall live forever, as long as the heavens and the earth endure unless your Lord wills otherwise. Indeed, your Lord accomplishes whatsoever He will. As for the happy, they shall live in Paradise forever, so as long as the heavens and the earth endure, and as your Lord wills an unbroken gift.

Thus, in reality, the absolute intercessor is none other than He; as He has stated explicitly:

«قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعاً»

<sup>73</sup> Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Quran, vol. 3, p. 57

<sup>74</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 3, p. 304 (old print)

<sup>75</sup> Surah Hūd, verses 106–108

Say: 'Intercession belongs altogether to Allah. And whoever besides God is an intercessor, and attains such a rank, does so by His permission and through His granting and conferment.

Accordingly, the phrase *مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ* means that no one has the right to intercede in His presence without His permission. This follows in continuity with the theme of God's *qayyūmiyyah* and His absolute dominion over the heavens and the earth. The continuation of the verse further emphasizes God's all-encompassing knowledge of what lies "before" and "behind" the intercessors—an expression indicating the utmost extent of His encompassing awareness of them. Therefore, they cannot, even within an intercession carried out by God's permission, bring about anything in His dominion that God neither wills nor is pleased with. Nor can others exploit their intercession to interfere in God's sovereignty and cause anything to occur that He has not decreed<sup>76</sup>.

## Exegesis

In explaining the Qur'anic clause *مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ* a report is narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq (p). The narrator says:

I said to Abū 'Abdillāh (PBUH): In God's statement,

«مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ»

who are those referred to by "them(هم)? The Imam (p) replied:

«نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاكَ الشَّافِعُونَ»

We are those intercessors.<sup>77</sup>

In one passage of *Ziyārat al-Jāmi'ah al-Kabīrah*, we read:

«[أَنْتُمْ] شُفَعَاءُ دَارِ الْبَقَاءِ»

You are the intercessors in the realm of the Hereafter.

The station of intercession, in its absolute sense, is exclusive to the Blessed Aalullah (p). Prophets and messengers cannot intercede without permission from those who possess the absolute authority of intercession. This is because only the Seal of the Messengers (PBUH&HF) and his Ahl al-Bayt have been entrusted with intercession, in the absolute sense, and they are authorized by

<sup>76</sup> Tafsir Nemuneh / Tafsir al-Mizan

<sup>77</sup> Al-Mahasin, vol. 1, p. 183

the Divine Essence. As for other prophets and messengers, this absolute authorization has not been granted to them.

وَلَا تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ<sup>78</sup>

In the interpretation of this verse, it has been narrated:

لَا يَشْفَعُ أَحَدٌ مِنْ أَنْبِيَاءِ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يَأْذِنَ اللَّهُ لَهُ

None of God's prophets and messengers will intercede on the Day of Resurrection until God gives them permission—

إِلَّا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ (صلى الله عليه و اله و سلم) فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَذِنَ لَهُ فِي الشَّفَاعَةِ مِنْ قَبْلِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

—“except the Messenger of God (PBUH&HF), for God has granted him permission for intercession before the Day of Resurrection.

وَالشَّفَاعَةُ لَهُ وَ لِأَئِمَّةٍ مِنْ وُلْدِهِ ثُمَّ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لِلْأَنْبِيَاءِ صَلَوَاتُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَعَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ

And intercession is exclusive to him and to the Imams from among his descendants, and after them it is for the other prophets—may God's blessings be upon all of them, and upon Muḥammad and his family.<sup>79</sup>

Not only intercession, but all matters of creation on the Day of Resurrection—including reckoning and judgment, the separation of the people of Paradise from the people of Hell, intercession, and so forth—will be in the hands of the Noble Ulu'l-Amr (p), for the command of God has been entrusted to them *المفوض اليهم امر الله*. And the highest-ranking figures upon whom all creation will stand in need are the Prophet (PBUH&HF) and Amir al-Mu'minin (p).

Imam Mūsā al-Kāẓim (p) said:

«إِذَا كَانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَمْ يَبْقَ مَلَكٌ مُقَرَّبٌ وَلَا نَبِيٌّ مُرْسَلٌ وَلَا مُؤْمِنٌ مُمْتَحَنٌ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يَحْتَاجُ إِلَيْهِمَا فِي ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ؛

On the Day of Resurrection, there will remain no near-stationed angel, no sent prophet, and no tried-and-tested believer except that, on that day, he will be in need of the two of them—[the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH&HF) and Imam Alī (p)].<sup>80</sup>

The Messenger of God (PBUH&HF) possesses the station of al-Maqām al-Maḥmūd and absolute intercession. This means that prophets and messengers, through his intercession, are able to intercede for their own communities. Likewise, scholars and Shiites—each according to his

<sup>78</sup> Surah Saba', verse 23

<sup>79</sup> Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 2, p. 201 / Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 38

<sup>80</sup> Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 562

rank—after having themselves been included within the intercession of their master, may also become intercessors for other believers who adhere to wilāyah.

In this regard, the only people who will certainly not be encompassed by intercession are the enemies of Muḥammad and the Family of Muḥammad (p). This is because, by taking the Tyrant of the Ummah as their guardian, they fell into shirk, and by killing and martyring the progeny of the Messenger of God (PBUH&HF) they caused him harm, distress, and injury. And whoever is not encompassed by the Great Intercession (al-shafā‘ah al-kubrā) will have no other intercessor.

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ

### Grammatical Analysis (I' rāb)

Ya 'lamu (يَعْلَمُ):

A present tense verb (fi' l muḍāri') in the nominative state, marked by the visible ḍammah. Its subject is a hidden pronoun (ḍamīr mustatir) whose implied form is “He,” referring to Allah, the Exalted.

Mā (مَا):

A relative pronoun (ism mawṣūl), built upon sukūn, in the accusative position as the direct object (maf'ūl bihi).

Bayna (بَيْنَ):

An adverb of place (ẓarf makān) attached to an omitted element within the relative clause (ṣilah al-mawṣūl), and it is in construct (muḍāf).

Aydīhim (أَيْدِيهِمْ):

Aydī is the genitive complement (muḍāf ilayh), with an implied kasrah; and “him” is a connected pronoun, built upon kasrah, in the genitive position as a second possessive complement.

Wa mā (وَ مَا):

The wāw is a conjunction, and mā is a relative pronoun built upon sukūn, conjoined to the previous “mā.”

Khalfahum (خَلْفَهُمْ):

Khalfa is an adverb of place in the accusative case, and it is in construct; “hum” is a connected pronoun, built upon ḍamm, in the genitive position as the possessive complement.

This prepositional/ adverbial phrase is attached to an omitted element within the relative clause, and the relative clause itself has no grammatical position.

Wa lā yuḥīṭūna (وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ):

The wāw is a conjunction; lā is a particle of negation; yuḥīṭūna is a present tense verb in the nominative state, marked by the retention of the nūn (since it is one of the five verbs al-af'āl al-khamsah).

Bi-shay' in (بِشَيْءٍ):

A prepositional phrase attached to yuḥīṭūna.

Min 'ilmihi (مِنْ عِلْمِهِ):

Min is a preposition; 'ilm is a noun in the genitive case governed by min, marked by a visible kasrah, and it is in construct; "hi" is a connected pronoun, built upon kasrah, in the genitive position as the possessive complement.

This prepositional phrase is attached to an omitted element functioning as an adjective describing "shay'."

Illā (إِلَّا):

A particle of exception that is considered redundant here (not a true exception).

Bi-mā (بِمَا):

A prepositional phrase attached to an omitted element, considered as a substitute (badal) for "shay'."

Shā'a (شَاءَ):

A past tense verb built upon fath; its subject is a hidden pronoun whose implied form is "He." The object is omitted and refers back to the antecedent of the relative pronoun. The clause "shā'a" is the relative clause (ṣilah al-mawṣūl) and has no grammatical position<sup>81</sup>.

## Lexical Meaning

In the seventh and eighth descriptions, the verse states: "He knows what is before them (the servants) and what is behind them," that is, He is aware of their past and their future ("ya'lamu mā bayna aydihim wa mā khalfahum"). "They do not encompass anything of His knowledge except what He wills." Only a small portion of knowledge, which He deems beneficial, has been placed at the disposal of others. Thus, the limited knowledge of created beings is but a ray from His infinite knowledge.

In reality, this statement serves as a proof for what was mentioned in the previous sentence concerning intercession; that is, Allah is fully aware of the past and future of the intercessors, and He knows even that which is hidden from them themselves. Therefore, they cannot present any new matter regarding those for whom they seek intercession in order to attract Allah's attention toward them. Consequently, intercession is valid only by His permission.

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<sup>81</sup> I'rab al-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 365

As for the meaning of “mā bayna aydīhim wa mā khalfahum,” by referring to Qur’anic usage it becomes clear that these two expressions are sometimes used with reference to place — such as in Surah al-A‘rāf (7:17), where Satan says:

«لَا يَنْهَهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ»

I will come to them from before them and from behind them, and from their right and from their left.

And at times they are used with reference to temporal meaning — such as in Surah Āl ‘Imrān (3:170), where it states:

«وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ»

The martyrs in the way of Allah give glad tidings to those who are behind them and have not yet joined them.

It is evident that in this case, the expression refers to a temporal dimension.

However, in Āyat al-Kursī, this expression appears to carry a comprehensive meaning that encompasses both dimensions of time and place. That is, Allah, the Exalted, is aware of what has occurred in the past and what will occur in the future; and He also has complete knowledge of what lies before people and what is behind them and hidden from their sight. In this way, the entire expanse of time and space is manifest before His knowledge. Therefore, every act — even intercession — must be by His permission:

«يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ...»

The context of this sentence, considering that the matter of intercession was mentioned earlier, is close to the context of the following verse:

«بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُكْرَمُونَ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَى وَهُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ»<sup>82</sup>.

We mention this in order to conclude that the apparent meaning of the phrase under discussion is that the plural pronoun in “bayna aydīhim wa mā khalfahum” refers to the intercessors indicated in the previous verse. The following noble verses also point to the same meaning:

«وَمَا نَنْزِلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا»<sup>83</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Surah As-Sajdah, verse 3

<sup>83</sup> Surah Maryam, verse 64

«عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَى غَيْبِهِ أَحَدًا إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَى مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا لِيَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رَسُولَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ، وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَحْصَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا»<sup>84</sup>

In brief, the phrase “ya ‘lamu mā bayna aydihim wa mā khalfahum” is a metaphor indicating Allah’s encompassing knowledge of what is present with the intercessors and what is absent from them and will occur after them. For this reason, the verse continues “Wa lā yuḥīṭūna bi-shay’ in min ‘ilmihi illā bimā shā”, in order to clarify the complete and perfect encompassing authority and dominion of Allah — that He encompasses them and their knowledge, while they do not encompass any of His knowledge except to the extent that He Himself wills.

In other words, Allah may grant some hidden knowledge and unseen secrets to whomever He wills. Thus, this serves as a response to those who imagine that knowledge of the unseen is absolutely impossible for human beings, and also as an interpretation of verses that negate knowledge of the unseen for mankind — meaning that a human being, by his own essence, knows nothing of the unseen except to the extent that Allah wills and teaches him.<sup>85</sup>

## Exegesis

In the interpretation of “Ya ‘lamu mā bayna aydihim wa mā khalfahum,” it is narrated from Imam al-Riḍā (p) that he said:

قَالَ «مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ» فَأُمُورُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَمَا كَانَ «وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ» أَيُّ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ بَعْدُ، قَوْلُهُ «إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ» أَيُّ بِمَا يُوحِي إِلَيْهِمْ

‘Mā bayna aydihim’ refers to the affairs of the prophets and what has already occurred; and ‘mā khalfahum’ refers to what has not yet taken place and will occur in the future.” (In a narration from Imam al-Bāqir (p), it is stated that it refers to what will occur concerning the reports of the Qā’im (p).) And His statement ‘illā bimā shā’ means: except what Allah wills — that is, what He reveals to them<sup>86</sup>.

The blessed beings of the possessors of authority (ulī al-amr), the Pure Imams (p), are witnesses and observers over the deeds of the servants, and nothing is hidden from their all-seeing Divine eye.

In a narration from Amir al-Mu’minin (p) concerning the station of the Imam, it is stated:

وَيُنْصَبُ لَهُ عَمُودٌ مِنْ نُورٍ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ يَرَى فِيهِ أَعْمَالَ الْعِبَادِ وَيُلْبَسُ الْهَيْبَةَ وَعِلْمَ الضَّمِيرِ وَيَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَيَرَى مَا بَيْنَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ فَلَا يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ مِنْ عَالَمِ الْمَلِكِ وَالْمَلَكُوتِ

<sup>84</sup> Surah Al-Jinn, verse 28

<sup>85</sup> Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. 2, p. 269 / Tafsir Nemuneh

<sup>86</sup> Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 1, p. 84; vol. 2, p. 65

For him there is erected a pillar of light extending from the earth to the heaven, through which he sees the deeds of the servants.

He is clothed with a garment of awe and knowledge of what is within hearts; he becomes aware of the unseen, and he sees what is between the east and the west. Thus, nothing of the realm of dominion (mulk) and the unseen kingdom (malakūt) remains hidden from him.<sup>87</sup>

Allah, the Exalted, says in Surah al-Tawbah (9:105):

وَقُلْ اَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ اِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

Say: Act, for Allah will see your deeds, and His Messenger, and the believers; then you will be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the witnessed, and He will inform you of what you used to do.

The noble verse 105 of Surah al-Tawbah clearly indicates the station of “overseer” belonging to the sacred existence of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF) and his pure successors (p). As it has been narrated in the interpretation of this verse:

رسولُ الله (ص) تُعْرَضُ عَلَيْهِ أَعْمَالُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ كُلِّ صَبَاحٍ، أِبْرَارُهَا وَفُجَّارُهَا

The deeds of this community — both the righteous and the sinful — are presented every morning to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF).

Then it was stated:

إِنَّا عَنَى

Meaning: we, the Ahl al-Bayt (p), are also included in this station.<sup>88</sup>

In supplications and transmitted texts, the title “‘Ayn Allāh al-nāẓirah” — meaning the all-seeing Eye of Allah — is explicitly attributed to Ḥaḍrat Baqiyatallāh al-A‘ẓam (may our souls be sacrificed for Him):

اللهم ادفع عن وليك وخليفتك... وعينك الناظرة بإذنك، وشاهدك على عبادك.<sup>89</sup>

O Allah, protect Your Wali and Your Vicegerent... and Your all-seeing Eye by Your permission, and Your witness over Your servants.

In continuation of the verse, the Most Holy Divine Essence states regarding the encompassing nature of knowledge: “Wa lā yuḥīṭūna bi-shay’in min ‘ilmihī illā bimā shā’.” “No one encompasses anything of His knowledge except whom Allah wills.” This knowledge of what has

<sup>87</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 169

<sup>88</sup> Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Quran, vol. 2, pp. 840–843

<sup>89</sup> Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 102, p. 112

been and what will be is contained within the Noble Qur'an, as stated in the noble verse 89 of Surah al-Nahl:

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

And We have sent down to you the Book as a clarification of all things.

All the knowledge of existence is in the Qur'an; the Qur'an is all knowledge, and the undivided reality of knowledge is contained within the Noble Qur'an. Supporting this is a verse of the Qur'an itself:

«مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ»

We have not neglected anything in the Book<sup>90</sup>.

Now, in Surah al-Ra'd, verse 43, the Noble Qur'an states:

قُلْ كَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ

Say: Sufficient is Allah as a witness between me and you, and those who possess the knowledge of the Book.

Amir al-Mu'minin (p) says:

أَنَا هُوَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْكِتَابِ.

I am the one who has knowledge of the Book of Allah.<sup>91</sup>

In Ziyārat Jāmi'ah Kabīrah, we recite:

«أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكُمْ رَضِيكُمُ [خَزَنَةَ لِعِلْمِهِ]؛

I bear witness that He has chosen you as treasurers of His knowledge.

The "lām" in this phrase is a lām of specification (lām al-takhsīṣ). Thus, it is as though the Divine Essence has singled out, from among all His creation, only the Imams (p) for the guardianship of the treasury of His knowledge.

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا

### Grammatical Analysis (I' rāb)

Wasi'a (وَسَّعَ):

A past tense verb (fi'l māḍī), built upon fath.

Kursiyyuhu (كُرْسِيُّهُ):

<sup>90</sup> Surah Al-An'am, verse 38

<sup>91</sup> Tafsir Ahl al-Bayt, vol. 7, p. 324 / Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 35, p. 432 / Basair al-Darajat, p. 216

Kursiyy is the subject (fā'il), nominative, marked by the visible ḍammah at the end; it is in construct (muḍāf).

“Hu” is a connected pronoun, built upon kasrah, in the genitive position as the possessive complement (muḍāf ilayh).

Al-samāwātī (السَّمَاوَاتِ):

The direct object (maf'ūl bihi), in the accusative case. The sign of its accusative is a visible kasrah instead of fathah (because it is a sound feminine plural).

This entire clause functions in the nominative position as the seventh predicate (khabar).

Wa al-arḍa (وَالْأَرْضِ):

The wāw is a conjunction;

al-arḍa is conjoined (ma'ṭūf) to al-samāwāt, accusative, marked by a visible fathah.

Wa lā (وَلَا):

The wāw is a conjunction;

lā is a particle of negation.

Ya 'ūduhu (يُؤَدُّهُ):

A present tense verb in the nominative state, marked by a visible ḍammah;

“hu” is a connected pronoun, built upon ḍamm, in the accusative position as the direct object.

Ḥifẓuhumā (حِفْظُهُمَا):

Ḥifẓ is the subject (fā'il), nominative, marked by a visible ḍammah, and it is in construct;

“humā” is a connected pronoun, built upon sukūn, in the genitive position as the possessive complement (muḍāf ilayh).<sup>92</sup>

## Lexical Meaning

The word “kursī, (كُرْسِي) ” from the perspective of its linguistic root, is derived from the root “k-r-s” (on the pattern of irth), and it carries the meaning of foundation and basis. It is also applied to anything whose parts are joined and compactly combined. For this reason, low seats are called “kursī,” because their components are pressed together and connected by a carpenter or craftsman.

In contrast to kursī is the word “‘arsh,” which denotes something roofed, a ceiling itself, or an elevated throne.

On the other hand, since a teacher sits upon a kursī while teaching, the term is sometimes used metaphorically to refer to knowledge. Likewise, because the kursī is under a person’s control and

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<sup>92</sup> I'rab al-Qur'an, vol. 1, p. 366

authority, in certain usages it serves as a metaphor for governance, power, and sovereignty over a domain<sup>93</sup>.

Regarding the meaning of *kursī* in the verses of the Qur'an, several views have been mentioned:

1. It refers to the knowledge and awareness of Allah that encompasses the heavens and the earth. This view is reported from Ibn 'Abbās, and the same interpretation has also been transmitted from the Imams (p). The term “knowledge,” by consideration of its locus — which is the center of the universe — has been called *kursī*.

Ḥafṣ ibn Ghiyāth narrates from Imam al-Ṣādiq (p) that he asked him about the meaning of:

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

The Imam replied: “It means His knowledge.”<sup>94</sup>

2. The intended meaning of *kursī* is sovereignty and kingship; sovereignty is called *kursī* by reference to its seat, namely the royal throne. Thus, the meaning would be that the power and dominion of Allah encompass all things.

3. In instances where 'arsh and *kursī* are mentioned together in contrast, according to this interpretation the 'arsh must represent a higher and more exalted level than the material universe — such as the realm of spirits, angels, and the world beyond nature<sup>95</sup>.

4. It refers to a being more vast than all the heavens and the earth, surrounding them on every side. Accordingly, the meaning of the verse would be that the *kursī* of Allah encompasses and surrounds all the heavens and the earth.

In a narration from Amir al-Mu'minin 'Alī (p) regarding the *kursī*, it is reported:

الْكُرْسِيُّ مُحِيطٌ بِالسَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَى

The *kursī* encompasses the heavens and the earth, and what is between them, and what lies beneath the depths of the soil<sup>96</sup>.

Some narrations even indicate that the *kursī* is far more expansive than the heavens and the earth, such that all of them in comparison to the *kursī* are like a ring placed in the middle of a vast desert. This has been narrated from Imam al-Ṣādiq (p):

مَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ عِنْدَ الْكُرْسِيِّ إِلَّا كَحَلَقَةٍ خَاتَمٍ فِي فَلَاةٍ، وَمَا الْكُرْسِيُّ عِنْدَ الْعَرْشِ إِلَّا كَحَلَقَةٍ فِي فَلَاةٍ<sup>97</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. 2, p. 272 / Tafsir al-Mizan — Surah Al-Baqarah

<sup>94</sup> Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 259

<sup>95</sup> Tafsir Javami' al-Jami', vol. 1, p. 140

<sup>96</sup> Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. 1, p. 260

<sup>97</sup> Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 1–2, p. 362

In any case, the preceding statements — namely, “Lahu mā fī al-samāwāti wa mā fī al-arḍ” — indicate that the meaning of the expansiveness of the kursī is the all-encompassing sovereignty of Divine dominion over all the heavens, the earth, and the realms of existence. Therefore, among the possible meanings attributed to kursī, the most appropriate is that it refers to the station of Lordship (maqām al-rubūbiyyah), the very station upon which all beings of the heavens and the earth depend for their existence.

Accordingly, the kursī represents a degree of Divine knowledge; and the expansiveness of Allah’s kursī means that there is a level of His knowledge in which the entire universe subsists, and in which all things are preserved and recorded. For this reason, immediately after this statement, the verse adds: “Wa lā ya’ūduhu ḥifẓuhumā/ وَ لَا يَؤُدُّهُ حَفْظُهُمَا

The word “ya’ūdu” is the present tense derived from the root awada (on the pattern of qawl), meaning heaviness or causing fatigue. Apparently, the pronoun in “ya’ūduhu” refers back to the kursī, though it is also possible to refer it directly to Allah, the Exalted. The reason that the verse concludes by stating that preserving the heavens and the earth does not weary Him (or His kursī) is to maintain harmony with the beginning of the verse — which negated drowsiness and sleep — since there too it declared that neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him, lest it prevent Him from sustaining the heavens and the earth.<sup>98</sup>

## Exegesis

It is narrated from Aṣḥabgh ibn Nubātah that Amir al-Mu’minin (p) was asked about the verse “Wasi’ a kursiyuhu al-samāwāti wa al-arḍ.” The Imam replied:

«السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا فِيهِمَا مِنْ مَخْلُوقٍ فِي جَوْفِ الْكُرْسِيِّ»

The heavens and the earth, and whatever of creation is within them, are all within the kursī<sup>99</sup>.

Then His Holiness added:

«وَلَهُ أَرْبَعَةُ أَمَلَاكٍ يَحْمِلُونَهُ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ»

And for the kursī there are four angels who bear it by the permission of Allah.

In another narration, Imam al-Ṣādiq (p), in explaining this same verse, said:

«قَالَ عَلِمُهُ»

It means that the kursī refers to Divine knowledge<sup>100</sup>.

<sup>98</sup> Tafsir Nemuneh, vol. 2, p. 272 / Tafsir al-Mizan (trans.), vol. 2, p. 513

<sup>99</sup> Tafsir al-Qummi, vol. 1, p. 85

<sup>100</sup> Al-Tawhid by Shaykh al-Saduq, p. 327

Thus, it becomes clear that the expression “fī jawf al-kursī” indicates the encompassing knowledge of the Divine Essence over all beings — a degree of knowledge upon which the entire universe subsists, and in which everything is preserved and recorded.

However, the narration continued with:

وَلَهُ أَرْبَعَةٌ أَمْلَاكٌ يَحْمِلُونَهُ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

Now the question arises: what is meant by “the angels” (Malā’ikah)?

It has been stated in the interpretation of the noble verse:

«تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ»

«الْمَلَائِكَةُ، الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ يَمْلِكُونَ عِلْمَ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ»

The intended meaning of the angels is the believers who bear the knowledge of Āl Muḥammad (p)<sup>101</sup>.

This meaning is fully consistent with the reality of the kursī; for the essence of dominion (mulk) is knowledge, and every existence in the realm of being subsists by knowledge. That immense dominion is the dominion of knowledge. The reality of malak, malik, and mālik is tied to the quality of knowledge — a luminous and simple (undivided) knowledge whose bearers are “those who possess the knowledge of Āl Muḥammad (p)”, and these are the Malā’ikah.

For this reason, in another statement from Amir al-Mu’minin (p), it is said:

«كُلُّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي الْكُرْسِيِّ»

Everything that Allah has created is within the kursī.

And this meaning accords with the noble verse:

«وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ»

Where Allah states that My mercy encompasses all things.

In the interpretation of this verse, it is also stated:

«يَقُولُ: عِلْمُ الْإِمَامِ، وَوَسِعَ عِلْمُهُ. الَّذِي هُوَ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ. كُلُّ شَيْءٍ، هُمْ شَيْعَتُنَا»

It means the knowledge of the Imam; and his knowledge — which is from the knowledge of Allah — encompasses all things, and they are our Shi‘ah.<sup>102</sup>

Therefore, the kursī is, in reality, a rank of Divine knowledge within which the entire universe is encompassed — a knowledge whose source flows from the blessed existence of the possessors of authority (p), those who are the treasurers of Divine knowledge and the manifestations of His all-

<sup>101</sup> Tafsir Furat al-Kufi, p. 581 / Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 25, p. 97

<sup>102</sup> Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 406

encompassing mercy, and who, in the heart and capacity of every believer, expand that knowledge into multiplicity according to Divine will.

It is narrated that the first heaven, in relation to the second heaven, is like a ring in a vast desert; the second heaven in relation to the third is like a ring in a desert; the third encompasses the second; and likewise the fourth, fifth, sixth, until the seventh heaven. The kursī encompasses the seventh heaven, and beyond the kursī is the ‘arsh, with the same proportion — like a ring in a desert. Beyond the ‘arsh begin the veils of light, which themselves possess many degrees.

Now, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH&HF) is reported to have said:

لَا يَسْتُرُ عَلِيًّا (عليه السلام) عَنِ اللَّهِ سِتْرًا، وَلَا يَحْجُبُهُ عَنِ اللَّهِ حِجَابًا، وَعَلَيٌّ (عليه السلام) السِّتْرُ وَالْحِجَابُ بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَبَيْنَ خَلْقِهِ.

There is no veil or barrier between ‘Alī (p) and the Most Holy Divine Essence — while ‘Alī (p) is the veil between Allah and His creation.

All of these veils are ‘Alī (p). All of these heavens are ‘Alī (p). The veils are the knowledge and recognition (ma‘rifah) of ‘Alī (p). Thus, the question becomes: where is the horizon of one’s vision and spirit? One person’s soul may rise only to the first heaven, while another ascends to another heaven.

وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

### Grammatical Analysis (I‘rāb)

Wa Huwa (وَهُوَ):

The wāw is a conjunction particle (ḥarf ‘aṭf).

Huwa is a detached pronoun (ḍamīr munfaṣil), built upon faḥ, in the nominative position as the subject (mubtada’).

Al-‘Aliyyu (الْعَلِيُّ):

A predicate (khabar) in the nominative case, marked by the visible ḍammah at the end.

Al-‘Azīmu (الْعَظِيمُ):

A second predicate (khabar thānī), also nominative, marked by the visible ḍammah at the end.<sup>103</sup>

### Exegesis

Āyat al-Kursī is the lofty summit of Tawḥīd within the vastness of the Noble Qur’an — a verse that, among all verses, is recognized for sovereignty and excellence. It is the master of verses; for

<sup>103</sup> I‘rāb al-Qur’an, vol. 1, p. 366

it begins with the Majestic Name and ends with Divine exaltedness and greatness. Its beginning is “Allāh”, and its conclusion is “Wa Huwa al-‘Aliyyu al-‘Azīm.” It speaks of absolute Oneness and culminates in supreme Majesty.

“Al-‘Aliyy al-‘Azīm” is among the Most Beautiful Names of the Most Holy Divine Essence, indicating His exaltedness and greatness. It is said to be the first Name that Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, chose for Himself. As Sultan ‘Alī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (p) stated:

لَكِنَّهُ اخْتَارَ لِنَفْسِهِ اَسْمَاءَ لِغَيْرِهِ يَدْعُوهُ بِهَا لِأَنَّهُ إِذَا لَمْ يُدْعَ بِاسْمِهِ لَمْ يُعْرَفْ فَأَوَّلُ مَا اخْتَارَ لِنَفْسِهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ...

Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, selected Names for Himself so that others may call upon Him by them; for Allah is not known unless He is called by His Name. The first Name He chose for Himself was ‘al-‘Aliyy al-‘Azīm.’<sup>104</sup>.

Allah, the Exalted, says in Surah al-A‘rāf, verse 180:

«وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا»

And to Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names, so call upon Him by them.

But what is the reality of these Names? Amir al-Mu‘minin ‘Alī (p) said:

أنا أسماء الله الحسنى، و أمثاله العلى، و آياته الكبرى

I am the conclusive of all the Divine Beautiful Names, and the supreme exemplars and the greatest signs of Him<sup>105</sup>.

Thus, the reality of the Name “al-‘Aliyy al-‘Azīm” is that blessed existence who is the supreme sign (āyah ‘uzmā) of the Most Holy Divine Essence — an existence in whom all the Names of Allah are gathered and manifested: Amir al-Mu‘minin ‘Alī (p). Accordingly, as narrated in a ḥadīth, Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, derived the blessed name “‘Alī” for him from His own Name “al-‘Aliyy al-‘Azīm”.

قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى يَا آدَمُ، هَذِهِ أَشْبَاحُ أَفْضَلِ خَلْقِي وَ بَرِيَّاتِي، هَذَا مُحَمَّدٌ، وَأَنَا الْمَحْمُودُ الْحَمِيدُ فِي أَعْمَالِي، شَقَقْتُ لَهُ اسْمًا مِنْ اسْمِي، وَ هَذَا عَلِيٌّ، وَأَنَا الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ، شَقَقْتُ لَهُ اسْمًا مِنْ اسْمِي

Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, said: O Ādam! These are the most noble of My creation. This is Muḥammad, and I am Maḥmūd and Ḥamīd in My actions; I derived for him a name from My Names. And this is ‘Alī, and I am al-‘Aliyy al-‘Azīm; I derived for him a name from My Names<sup>106</sup>.

و لا حول و لا قوة الا بالله العلي العظيم

<sup>104</sup> Al-Kafi, vol. 1, p. 113 / Uyun Akhbar al-Rida, vol. 1, p. 129

<sup>105</sup> Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Quran, vol. 4, p. 95

<sup>106</sup> Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Quran, vol. 1, p. 196