

## بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

## Class Notes – Lesson 8

وَمَا وَصَفَ بِهِ نَفْسَهُ فِي أَعْظَمِ آيَةٍ فِي كِتَابِهِ؛ حَيْثُ يَقُولُ: ﴿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﴾﴾ [البقرة: ٢٥٥] . وَلِهَذَا كَانَ مَنْ قَرَأَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ لَيْلَةً لَمْ يَزَلْ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَافِظًا وَلَا يَضُرُّهُ شَيْطَانٌ حَتَّى يُصْبِحَ.

*It is also found in what Allah describes Himself with in the greatest verse of His Book, whereby He says: 'Allah, there is none worthy of worship save Him, the Living the Self-Sustaining. He is not subject to drowsiness or sleep. Everything in the heavens and the earth belong to Him. Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but they cannot grasp any of His knowledge except what He wills. His Footstool encompasses the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Most High, the Magnificent'. [al-Baqarah: 255]*

*It is for this reason that Allah will appoint a protector over whoever recites this verse at night time and no devil will be able to get close to him until morning.*

- (وَمَا وَصَفَ بِهِ نَفْسَهُ فِي أَعْظَمِ آيَةٍ فِي كِتَابِهِ) – *'It is also found in what Allah describes Himself with in the greatest verse of His Book'*. Meaning that affirmation and negation of Allah's Attributes is also found in the greatest *ayah* of the Quran. The *ayah* that is being referred is Ayatul Kursi.

It was given this name because it mentions Allah's Kursi (Footstool). It is considered the greatest *ayah* in the Quran because the Prophet ﷺ asked Ubayy Ibn Ka'ab: 'Do you know what the greatest *ayah* in the Quran is? Ubayy responded by reciting Ayatul Kursi. The Prophet ﷺ patted him on the chest in approval and said:

« لِيَهْنِكَ الْعِلْمُ أَبَا الْمُنْذِرِ »

*Rejoice by this knowledge Abul Mundhir.* [Muslim]

Thus, the Prophet ﷺ affirmed that it is the greatest *ayah* in the Quran, and this is also evidence of Ubayy's knowledge of the Quran.

- {اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ} – **'Allah, there is none worthy of worship save Him'**. Allah commences the *ayah* by informing that He alone is worthy of all worship. There is no other deity worthy of worship except Him. Anything else worshipped besides Him is falsehood (*baatil*).
- {الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ} – **'The Living, the Self-Sustaining'**. His Name *al-Hayy* (The Living) carries the meaning that eternal life belongs to Allah alone. His life was not preceded by non-existence nor is it followed by cessation, nor is it subject to deficiency.

His Name *al-Qayyum* (the Self-Sustaining) carries the meaning that Allah maintains Himself. He is independent from His creation having no need to eat, drink or sleep. His creation cannot maintain themselves, but rather rely on Allah for their existence, growth, and provision. Therefore, Allah is sufficient within Himself (He does not need anyone), and suffices and sustains all His creation.

Some scholars are of the opinion that when these two Names of Allah are combined, they constitute Allah's Greatest Name with which if He is called by, He will respond. This is because these two Names encompass the meaning of all Allah's Names and Attributes:

- *al-Hayy*: Represents the Attributes relating to His Essence (*dhaat*) such as His Knowledge, His Hearing and Seeing, His Hands, His Shin, and other such attributes.
- *al-Qayyum*: Represents the Attributes relating to His Actions, such as creating, sustaining, giving and taking of life, responding to *du'aa*, granting victory and other such actions.
- {لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ} – **'He is not subject to drowsiness or sleep'**. *al-Sinah* is the drowsiness which precedes sleep. Allah did not say that He does not sleep, but rather mentioned that He is not overtaken by sleep, because sleep can be by choice, but to be overtaken by sleep is by coercion.

Drowsiness and sleep are attributes of absolute imperfection which is why Allah negates them from Himself. The Prophet ﷺ said:

« إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَا يَنَامُ وَلَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ أَنْ يَنَامَ »

**Allah does not sleep, and it does not befit Him to sleep.** [Muslim]

When negating an attribute from Allah, the perfection of its opposite must be established. Allah is not overtaken by drowsiness or sleep, because of the perfection of His Life (*al-Hayy*) and the perfection of His Maintenance (*al-Qayyum*).

Sleep is required by the creation in order to rest from fatigue and regain strength for future work. This is an imperfection in regards to the creation. However, it is from the perfection of Allah's Living that He does not need to sleep, and from the perfection of His Maintenance that He does not sleep.

- {لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ} – **'Everything in the Heavens and Earth belongs to Him'**. Allah has complete dominion over everything in the Heavens such as the Angels, Paradise, and other creations we do not know of. His dominion also extends to everything on the earth, such as humans, *jinn*s, animals, plants, and other such creations.
- {مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ} – **'Who can intercede with Him except by His permission?'**. From the extension of Allah's dominion is that none can intercede with Him on the Day of Judgement except with His permission. Interceding on behalf of someone (*shafa'ah*) is done to either save them from harm or to benefit them in some way. For example, the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ for the people at the place of gathering (*mahshar*) on the Day of Resurrection so that Allah will begin judging them, is an intercession to save them from harm. His intercession for the people of Paradise to enter it, is one of bringing benefit.

Allah mentions one of the conditions of intercession before Him, and that is that He grants permission for the intercession to take place. The second condition is that Allah is pleased with both the intercessor and the one interceded for. Allah says:

﴿ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَرْتَضَى ﴾

**And they intercede not except for him whom He is pleased.** [al-Anbiya: 28]

- {يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ} – **‘He knows what is before them and what is behind them’**. Allah’s knowledge encompasses everything which is yet to come (what is before them) and everything which has already occurred (what is behind them). His knowledge includes the specific and general matters and the hidden and apparent matters.
- {وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ} – **‘But they cannot grasp any of His knowledge except what He wills’**. This can have two meanings, both which are correct.
  1. That the creation knows nothing of Allah’s Names, Attributes and Actions except that which He has revealed to them.
  2. That the creation knows nothing of what Allah knows in the heavens and the earth except that which He has taught them.

The second meaning is more general, because the knowledge of His Self and His Attributes all fall under what is known to Him. We do not have knowledge of anything except if Allah wills us to have knowledge of it – *‘except what He wills’*.

- {وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ} – **‘His Footstool encompasses the heavens and the earth’**. Meaning that His Kursi surrounds the heavens and the earth and is greater than them, because if it was not greater than them, it would not encompass them. Regarding The Kursi, Ibn Abbas narrated: *‘It is the place of Allah’s two Feet’*.

The Kursi is not the Throne of Allah, as some people wrongly believe. The Prophet ﷺ informed us that the Kursi compared to the Throne is like a ring thrown in a desert. This indicates the magnificence of these creations, and the magnificence of these creations indicates the magnificence of their Creator.

- {وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا} – **‘And He is never weary of preserving them’**. The heavens and the earth require constant preservation and maintenance, so they do not cease to exist. Allah’s protection and maintenance of them does not tire Him, nor does it pose any burden on Him. Allah says:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُمَسِّكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا وَلَئِن زَالَتَا إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ ﴾

**Allah holds the heavens and the earth, lest they cease. And if they should cease, no one could hold them after Him.** [Fatir: 41]

This is an attribute of absolute imperfection which Allah negates from Himself. The affirming attribute which this negating attribute establishes, is Allah’s perfect ability (*Qudra*) and Power (*Quwua*).

- {وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ} – **‘He is the Most High, the Magnificent’**. His Name *al-Aliyy* (The Most High) can have two meanings.
  1. That He is the Most High in His Essence (*Dhaat*). He is above everything, and there is nothing above or besides Him.
  2. That He is the Most High in His Attributes (*Sifaat*). His Attributes are exalted and there is no imperfection in them in any way.

His Name *al-Atheem* (The Magnificent) carries the meaning that Allah’s Attributes are of incomparable magnificence. He has the most magnificent Attributes which befit His Majesty.

- { ( ... وَلِهَذَا كَانَ مَنْ قَرَأَ ... ) } – **‘It is for this reason that whoever recites ...’**. This is part of a *hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah, whereby the Prophet ﷺ made him a guard over the *sadaqah* wealth. Abu Hurairah apprehended someone attempting to steal this wealth and threatened to take him to the Prophet ﷺ.

The thief pleaded not to be taken to the Prophet ﷺ promising to teach Abu Hurairah some words of advice. He told him:

إِذَا أَوَيْتَ إِلَى فِرَاشِكَ فَافْرَأْ آيَةَ الْكُرْسِيِّ لَنْ يَزَالَ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَافِظٌ، وَلَا يَقْرُبُكَ شَيْطَانٌ حَتَّى تُصْبِحَ. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ :  
صَدَقَكَ وَهُوَ كَذُوبٌ، ذَاكَ شَيْطَانٌ.

***Whenever you go to your bed, recite Ayatul Kursi and a guard from Allah will remain with you, and no shaytaan will approach you until dawn. When the Prophet ﷺ heard the story he said: 'He told you the truth, though he is a liar, and he himself was a Shaytaan'. [Bukhari]***

#### ***Review questions***

1. How do we know that Ayatul Kursi is the greatest *ayah* in the Quran?
2. Briefly explain what Allah's Names *al-Hayy* and *al-Qayyum* mean. Why did some scholars say that together they constitute Allah's Greatest Name?
3. Allah negates that drowsiness and sleep can overtake Him. What are the affirming attributes which these negating attributes establish?
4. What condition of the intercession before Allah is mentioned in Ayatul Kursi? What is the other condition which is mentioned elsewhere in the Quran?
5. What is the Kursi of Allah, and how is it different from His Throne?
6. Allah negates that weariness can overtake Him when preserving the heavens and the earth. What are the affirming attributes which this negating attribute establishes?