



Abu 'Ammar

Ayat al-Kursi

A Brief Explanation

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Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem

Allahu la ilaha illa hu
Al-hayy al-qayyum
la ta'khudhuhu sinatun wa la nawm
lahu ma fis-samawati wa ma fil-ard
man dhal-ladhi yashfa'u 'indahu illa bi idhnih
ya'lamu ma bayna aydihim wa ma khalfahum
wa la yuhituna bi shay'in min 'ilmihi illa bima sha'
wasi'a kursiyyuhus-samawati wal-ard
wa la ya'uduhu hifzuhuma
wa huwa al-aliyy al-azeem

Allah – There is no god but He,
The Living, the Everlasting,
Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep,
To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth.
Who is there that can intercede with His, except by His leave?
He knows what lies before them and what is after them,
And they comprehend not anything of His Knowledge save as He wills.
His throne comprises the heavens and the earth,
The preserving of them fatigues Him not,
And He is the All-high, All-glorious.

[Al-Quran: Surat al-Baqarah, Ayah 255]

The Virtues of Ayat Al-Kursi

The merits of Ayat al-Kursi have been mentioned in numerous hadiths. Although the Quran itself and every verse therein are of excellence, Ayat al-Kursi is certainly the most excellent verse of all its verses. This verse is called Ayat al-Kursi due to the word “Kursi” being mentioned in it. Of all the chapters in the Quran, the most excellent chapter is Surat al-Ikhlās, and the most excellent verse is Ayat al-Kursi. One virtue of Ayat al-Kursi is that more reward is obtained for reading it than any other verse.

Allamah Ghulam Rasul Sa’idi writes that scholars have said that verses of the Quran where accounts of believers are mentioned are more excellent than verses of the Quran in which accounts of infidels and hypocrites are mentioned. Similarly, verses of the Quran where prophets (Peace be upon them) are mentioned are more excellent than verses of the Quran where believers are mentioned. And, verses of the Quran where the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is mentioned are more excellent than verses where other prophets (Peace be upon them) are mentioned. Verses of the Quran where the names of Allah Most High are praised are more excellent than all other verses including verses where the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) is mentioned.

The reason why Ayat al-Kursi is the most excellent verse, is that this verse mentions the names of Allah Most High more than any other verse (i.e. this verse contains the most remembrance (dhikr) of Allah Most High). For example, some verses of the Quran may mention the names of Allah Most High two times, some may mention the names of Allah Most High four times, and some ten times. But in Ayat al-Kursi, the names of Allah Most High have been mentioned seventeen times. Ayat al-Kursi mentions six attributes (sifat) of Allah Most High, all six being mentioned in this single verse. The attributes mentioned are: the Divine Oneness (Wahdaniyyah) of Allah Most High, His Life (Hayah), His Knowledge (‘Ilm), His Kingdom (Mulk), His Divine Power (Qudrah) and His Will (Iradah).

[Sharh Sahih Muslim: Fada’il al-Qur’an, under Surat al-Kahf & Ayat al-Kursi. Allamah Ghulam Rasul Sa’idi]

Imam Muslim writes that Ubayy bin Ka’b (Allah be well pleased with him) narrated that one day, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) asked “O Ubayy! What is the most excellent verse of the Quran?” Ubayy replied, “Allah and His Messenger know best.” The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “In your opinion, what is the most excellent verse of the Quran?” Ubayy bin Ka’b replied, “Allah – There is no god but He”(i.e. Ayat al-Kursi). The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) placed his hand on his chest and said, “O Ubayy bin Ka’b! May your knowledge be pleasant for you.”

[Sahih Muslim: Fada’il al-Qur’an, under Surat al-Kahf & Ayat al-Kursi. Imam Muslim]

Imam Tirmidhi writes that Abu Hurayrah (Allah be well pleased with him) reports that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said that whomsoever recites the first verses of Surat al-Mu’minun and then Ayat al-Kursi in the morning, will remain under the protection of Allah Most High until the evening. Similarly, whomsoever reads this during the night, will remain under the protection of Allah Most High until the morning.

[al-Shama’il al-Tirmidhi: Tafsir of Surat al-Baqarah, under Ayat al-Kursi. Imam al-Tirmidhi]

Imam Abu Dawud writes that Wathala (Allah be well pleased with him) reported that one day a man came to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and asked, “What is the most

excellent verse of the Quran?” The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) replied, “Ayat al-Kursi.”

[Sunan Abi Dawud: Fada'il al-Qur'an. Imam Abu Dawud]

Imam Darmi writes that the Devil flees from a home in which Ayat al-Kursi is recited, and does not return until the next morning. Abu Sanan (Allah be well pleased with him) reported that whomsoever reads the first four verses of Surat al-Baqarah, Ayat al-Kursi, and then the last three verses of Surat al-Baqarah will not forget the Quran. Ishaq added that whatever one learns, would not be forgotten. Asma' bint Yazid (Allah be well pleased with her) reported that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said that al-ism al-a'zam (The greatest name of Allah Most High) is contained within Ayat al-Kursi.

[Darmi: Chapter Fada'il al-Quran. Imam Darmi]

Qadi Thana'ullah writes that Abu Hurayrah (Allah be well pleased with him) reports that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said that Ayat al-Kursi is the chief of all verses of the Quran. Anas (Allah be well pleased with him) reports that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said that Ayat al-Kursi is equal to a quarter of the Quran. Abu Amamah (Allah be well pleased with him) narrates that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said that whomsoever recites Ayat al-Kursi in the night before sleeping, Allah Most High will protect him, his house and the neighbouring houses.

[Tafsir al-Mazhari: Under Ayat al-Kursi. Qadi Thana'ullah Pani-pathi]

Allamah Ghulam Rasul Sa'idi writes that al-ism al-a'zam is the greatest name of Allah Most High. Allah Most High has ninety-nine names, and only this one is His Greatest name, and hence called al-ism al-a'zam. If someone makes supplication to Allah Most High and mentions al-ism al-a'zam, Allah Most High will answer it, in sha Allah.

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said that whomsoever, after the obligatory prayer, recites Ayat al-Kursi, Allah Most High will protect him until the next prayer. The Prophets, the Truthful Ones and the Martyrs, were steadfast upon its recitation. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said that whomsoever recites Ayat al-Kursi after each prayer, will enter Paradise straight away after death. This hadith has been narrated by Imam Nisa'i, Imam Tabarani, Imam Ibn Sunni, Hafiz al-Haythami and Imam al-Bayhaqi.

[Tafseer Tibiyan al-Quran: Tafseer Ayat al-Kursi. Allamah Ghulam Rasul Sa'idi]

Hafiz Ibn Kathir writes, in his commentary on Ayat al-Kursi that the chain of transmission of the above hadith is weak. Ibn al-Jawzi has said that this hadith has been fabricated.

[Tafsir Ibn Kathir: Under Ayat al-Kursi. Hafiz Ibn Kathir]

Although the chain of transmission may be weak, surely other, strong hadiths have informed of the excellence and benefits of Ayat al-Kursi. If the above mentioned hadith of the recitation of Ayat al-Kursi after obligatory prayer, being rewarded by one being admitted into heaven without questioning, is fabricated, there is no doubt that Allah Most High will reward greatly, the one who recites Ayat al-Kursi after the obligatory prayer. And Allah Most High knows best.

Imam Bukhari writes that Abu Hurayrah (Allah be well pleased with him) said:

The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) deputised me to keep Sadaqah of Ramadan. Someone came and started taking handfuls of the Sadaqah, quickly. I took hold of him and said, “By Allah, I will take you to the Messenger of Allah.” He said, “I am needy and have many dependents.” I released him, and in the morning the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) asked me, “What did your prisoner do yesterday?” I said, “O Messenger of

Allah! The person complained of being needy and of having many dependents, so, I pitied him and let him go.” The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “Indeed, he told you a lie and he will return.” I believed that he would return again as the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) had told me that he would return. So, I waited for him watchfully. When he returned and started stealing handfuls of foodstuff, I caught hold of him again and said, “I will definitely take you to the Messenger of Allah. He said, “Leave me, for I am very needy and have many dependents. I promise I will not come back again.” I pitied him and let him go.

In the morning the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) asked me, “What did your prisoner do.” I replied, “O Messenger of Allah! He complained of his great need and of too many dependents, so I took pity on him and set him free.” The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “Verily, he told you a lie and he will return.” I waited for him attentively for the third time, and when he came and started stealing handfuls of the Sadaqah, I caught hold of him and said, “I will surely take you to the Messenger of Allah as it is the third time you promise not to return, yet you break your promise and come.” He said, “Forgive me and I will teach you some words with which Allah will benefit you.” I asked, “What are they?” He replied, “Whenever you go to bed, recite Ayat al-Kursi: ‘Allah – There is no God but He, the Living, the Everlasting,’ till you finish the whole verse. If you do so, Allah will appoint a guard for you who will stay with you and no devil will come near you till morning.” So, I released him. In the morning, the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) asked, “What did your prisoner do yesterday?” I replied, “He claimed that he would teach me some words by which Allah will benefit me, so I let him go.” The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) asked, “What are they?” I replied, “He said to me, ‘Whenever you go to bed, recite Ayat al-Kursi from the beginning to the end: ‘Allah – There is no God but He, the Living, the Everlasting.’ He further said to me, ‘If you do so, Allah will appoint a guard for you, who will stay with you, and no devil will come near you till morning.’ (Abu Hurayrah or another sub-narrator) added that they (the companions) were very keen to do good deeds. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “He really spoke the truth, although he is an absolute liar. Do you know whom you were talking to, these three nights, O Abu Hurayra?” Abu Hurayra said, “No.” He said, “It was the Devil.”

[Sahih al-Bukhari: Book of Wakalah. Imam al-Bukhari]

The Meaning of the Words: ‘Kursi’ and ‘Intercession’

As previously mentioned, Ayat al-Kursi has been named thus, due to the word Kursi appearing therein. This raises a question, as to what exactly the word Kursi refers to.

Imam Tabari writes that the Companions (Allah be well pleased with them) and students of the Companions (Allah be well pleased with them) held a difference of opinion concerning the meaning of the word Kursi, which appears in this verse. Some scholars are of the opinion that no one knows the true meaning of this word apart from Allah Most High. Other scholars say that the word Kursi in this verse refers to the Knowledge of Allah Most High, meaning that His Knowledge encompasses all that is the heavens and the earth. Some of the Companions (Allah be well pleased with them) and their students (Allah be well pleased with them) have held the opinion that, the word Kursi refers to the Throne of Allah Most High. This is because another name for throne is Kursi. They also held that the Throne of Allah Most High comprises the heavens and the earth.

[Tafsir al-Tabari: Under Ayat al-Kursi. Imam al-Tabari]

Hafiz Ibn Kathir writes that ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abbas (Allah be well pleased with him) narrates that

the meaning of the word Kursi in this verse is the Knowledge of Allah Most High, and His Knowledge encompasses the earth. Another opinion is that the Kursi is a creation of Allah Most High whose magnitude makes that of the heavens and the earth insignificant. Another opinion is, that due to the Throne praising Allah Most High it makes a “creaking” sound. This hadith has been recorded in many books, but in the chain of narrators, a narrator is unknown and therefore this narration cannot be authentic.

[Tafsir Ibn Kathir: Under Ayat al-Kursi. Hafiz Ibn Kathir]

Qadi Shawkani writes that the hadith, which mentions the creaking of the Throne, contains, in its chain of transmission, a narrator called ‘Abdullah bin Khalifah. He is unknown, and has heard nothing from ‘Umar (Allah be well pleased with him). The chain of narration does not even reach back to ‘Umar (Allah be well pleased with him). The hadith, which mentions a “Resting place of the two feet”, contains a narrator called al-Hakam al-Kufi, in its chain of transmission, who has been rejected (by the scholars of hadith).

[Fath al-Qadir: Under Ayat al-Kursi. Qadi Shawkani]

Allamah al-Allusi al-Hanafi writes that no one knows the true meaning of the word Kursi in this verse, except Allah Most High. Matters such as these are known as the mutashabihat.

[Ruh al-Mani: Under Ayat al-Kursi. Allamah al-Allusi al-Hanafi]

Allah Most High says in Ayat al-Kursi that no one may intercede on the Day of Judgement, unless He Himself has given permission to do so. Intercession means to plead on behalf of someone. On the Day of Judgement, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) will intercede for the Muslims. As a result of the supplication (Du‘a) of the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) to Allah Most High, He will show mercy to them and admit them to Paradise, in sha Allah. In the same way, Allah Most High will accept the intercession of the pious and righteous Muslims. This intercession will only be accepted on behalf of Muslims, and not for the disbelievers. Intercession, thus means, that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) and the righteous Muslims make supplication to Allah Most High on behalf of someone else.

It is a misconception that intercession means that Allah Most High is forced to pardon someone, whom Allah Most High did not wish to pardon. This implies that the will of Allah Most High can be overcome by the will of any of His creation. This is plain disbelief. The correct Islamic belief is that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) loves the Muslim Ummah, so Allah Most High, out of love for the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), will not leave his supplication unanswered, when he makes supplication for the Muslim Ummah.

Summary of The Hadiths Concerning Intercession (Shafa‘ah)

Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim write that the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said that on the Day of Judgement, the people will gather together and search for someone who will intercede for them. The people will gather together and approach Adam (Peace be upon him), and say, “O father of mankind! Make intercession for us before Allah”. Adam (Peace be upon him) will order them to go to Ibrahim (Peace be upon him). They will ask him the same question, but Ibrahim (Peace be upon him) will then order them to go to Musa (Peace be upon him), who will in turn order them to go to ‘Isa (Peace be upon him). ‘Isa (Peace be upon him) will then command them, saying, “Go to the last Prophet, Muhammad.” They will all come to the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace), who will say that he will intercede for them. He will ask for permission to praise Allah Most High, which will be granted to him. The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, “When I praise Allah Most High, I will then bow my head in

prostration. Allah Most High will command me to remove my head from prostration, saying, 'Ask from Me whatever you wish and I will grant it.' I will say 'O Lord of the Worlds! Save my Ummah.' I will be ordered to go to hell and remove whoever has an atom of faith in them. I will return to Allah Most High and prostrate again, and Allah Most High will command me to ask Him whatever I wish, and He will grant it. I will do this four times, removing many people from the fire of Hell."

After this, the Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) will praise Allah Most High, and then make prostration. Allah Most High will say, "O Muhammad! Ask from Me whatever you wish and I will grant it." The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) will then say, "O Allah! Give me permission to remove those people from Hell fire who have said, 'There is no God except Allah'." Allah Most High will say, "This matter is not for you, but by My Might, Glory, Pride, and Greatness, I will certainly bring out of it, those who said, 'There is no God except Allah'."

The Prophet (Allah bless him and give him peace) said, "I swear by Him in whose hand my soul is, that none of you is more eager to claim a right when it has become clear to you than those, who believe in Allah, will be, on the Day of Resurrection, to make claims on behalf of their brethren who are in Hell. They will say, 'O our Lord! They were fasting with us, praying and performing pilgrimage,' and will be told to bring out those they recognise. Their faces will be protected from the fire and they will bring forth a large number of people, then say, 'O our Lord! Not one of those about whom You commanded us, remains therein.' He will reply, 'Go back and bring forth those in whose hearts you find as much as half a dinar of good.' When they have brought forth a large number of people He will say, 'Go back and bring forth those in whose hearts you find as much as an atom of good'. When they have brought forth a large number of people, they will say, 'O our Lord! We have not left in it any good' Then Allah Most High will say, 'The angels have interceded, the prophets have interceded, the believers have interceded and only the Most Merciful of the merciful ones remains'."

Allah Most High will remove a handful of (Muslim) people who have done no good deeds at all. He will bathe them in a river just in front of the door of Paradise and will then admit them into Paradise.

[Sahih al-Bukhari: Book of Tawhid. Imam Bukhari. Also, Sahih Muslim: Book of Iman. Imam Muslim]

May Allah Most High accept what we have written and if we have made any mistake, may He forgive us. May Allah Most High grant us the intercession of our Blessed Prophet, Muhammad (Allah bless him and give him peace) on the Day of Judgement. Amin.

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