

CHAPTER 2, VERSE 255: THE GREATEST VERSE OF THE QURAN (PART 1 OF 2)

Rating: 5.0

Description: Islam is a God-centered religion. Nothing illustrates this reality better than the verse named 'The Greatest' by the Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. Read this article to find out more about this verse and its beautiful explanation of who is God.

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Published on: 06 Apr 2015

Last modified on: 06 Feb 2023

"Allah: there is no true God but Him. The Ever-Living, the Eternal Master of all. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. Who is there that can intercede with Him, except by His permission? He knows all that lies open before them and all that lies hidden from them; whereas they cannot attain to anything of His knowledge save as He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Most Great." (Quran 2:255)

Introduction: What is Verse of *Kursi*?

The second chapter of the Muslim scripture, the Quran, is called *Surah al-Baqarah*, or 'The Cow.' It contains a beautiful and important verse that is the 'greatest' verse of their book. Known in Arabic as *Ayah al-Kursi*, the verse speaks beautifully about God. This verse is known for its profound meaning, rhythmic and sublime language, its inspiring and comforting message, and magnificent description of God's powers and attributes. The verse summarizes, in powerful words, the basic principles of the Islamic faith, citing those attributes of God that most aptly assert the meaning and significance of the basic Islamic principle of *Tawhid*: the oneness of God.



The verse has often won the admiration of non Muslims, "... a magnificent description of the divine majesty and providence: but it must not be supposed the translation comes up to the dignity of the original" (*Sale*). "One of the most admired passages in the Koran" (*Lane*). "One of the grandest verses of the Qur'an" (*Wherry*).

Virtues & Benefits

The Quran, or Islamic scripture, is unique in the sense that all of it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic and he praised some of its passages and attached special rewards in reciting them. Prophet Muhammad said,

"Everything has its pinnacle and the pinnacle of the Quran is Surah al-Baqarah. In it there is a verse which is the greatest in the Quran." (Tirmidhi)

When a believer truly believes in these attributes of God, it frees him from anxiety and fear of the unknown. It also makes him strive to be pious and righteous as he knows that he will be answerable for his deeds on the Day of Judgment where nothing except his piety and faith can come to his rescue. It makes him refute the claims of polytheists who believe in many deities and affirm other gods beside God.

Being the greatest verse of the Quran, Muslims are encouraged to recite it regularly. The Prophet Muhammad said that if one reads this verse after every prayer, Muslims pray five times daily, then only a person's life (that ends with death) will stop that person from entering Paradise. The believer who recites it following an obligatory prayer is under the care and protection of God until the commencement of the next prayer^[1].

Finally, the Prophet said that reciting *Ayah al-Kursi* will protect you, your children, and your house^[2].

Explanation

This verse comprises of 10 phrases. Below is a brief explanation of each one of them:

"Allah: there is no true God but Him."

There is no God save Him. There is none who deserves worship but Him. None are to be worshipped *instead of* Him or *along with* Him. This is our purpose in life and the reason God sent prophets and revealed scriptures. And ultimately, it is this aspect about which we will be judged on the Day of Judgment.

God is One and none has the right to be worshiped but Him. We should associate no partners with Him. He Alone has the ultimate unconditional right to be worshipped.

This statement clearly and definitively distinguishes the Islamic concept of God from that of the Trinity, adopted and advanced by Christian church councils long after Jesus, and from the pagan beliefs of the ancient Egyptians who confused God with the sun and recognized the existence of lesser gods beside Him.

"The Ever-Living, the Eternal Master of all."

While everything on this earth is mortal and temporary, God is eternal and ever living. It is God who sustains everyone and everything. The Living, i.e., the Eternal, who has no beginning and who will have no end. In other words, this is His Attribute and not the

quality of He being alive (in the sense in which we understand life). All things worshipped besides God are neither ever-living, nor does creation depend on them. Rather, they themselves depend upon God for their existence and sustenance.

God is self-subsisting who sustains all else. He neither changes nor disappears. Creation cannot exist without God holding it together.

This corrects the Jewish and Christian idea of God 'resting' on the seventh day after His great exertion in creating the universe, 'and on the seventh day God ended his work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made' (Genesis 2: 2, 3)

"Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him."

No shortcoming, unawareness or ignorance ever touches God. Rather, He is aware of, and controls what every soul earns, has perfect watch over everything, nothing escapes His knowledge, and no secret matter is secret from Him. Among His perfect attributes, is the fact that He is never affected by slumber or sleep. In fact, He started this phrase with slumber which is a lighter condition before mentioning sleep, which is a much deeper condition. In other words, He is telling us that if mere slumber cannot overtake Him, why then should sleep!

Everything on the earth follows a cycle. The sun rises and sets. The tides ebb and flow. The moon wanes and grows. Living creatures are born and then they die. But our Creator is nothing like the things we see around ourselves. God is free of all imperfections, bodily needs and weaknesses. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him.

"His is all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth."

To God belongs whatsoever is in them and between them. He is the Most High, the Provider, the King, the Regulator. All creations are subjects in His Kingdom, and He is able to do whatever He pleases with them.

This concept gives a new definition of ownership as applied to individual human beings. For, since God is the ultimate owner of all that exists, no one else can claim absolute ownership of anything in this world. People are, therefore, mere custodians of what they possess, which is entrusted to them by God. Accordingly, they are bound by the terms of that custodianship, as set out by God Almighty, the ultimate owner, in the divine code of living revealed to mankind. Any violation of these terms leads to disqualification and censure of the trustee.

Footnotes:

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