

GOD IS TRANSCENDENT

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GOD IS TRANSCENDENT

The Arabic words used to denote transcendence in the following verses of the Qur'an is *al-'a'la*, which means "the higher one," "the superior," "the victor," "the Most High" and "the Most Exalted."

AL-'A'LA

سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى

*Glorify the Name of your Lord, **the Most High**.*¹

إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى

*Except to seek the Countenance of his Lord, **the Most High**.*²

The Qur'an confirms the rationally derived attribute of God – transcendence.

A more specific indirect proof is given below by showing the transcendence of God over His Throne, which transcends His Footstool, which transcends the heavens and the earth and, therefore, the universe.

THE TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD'S FOOTSTOOL OVER THE UNIVERSE

The relevant Arabic words used in the following verses of the Qur'an are:

- *kursi*, which means "foot-stool", "pedestal" and "chair";
- *wasi'a*, which means "encloses", "encompasses", "holds", "accommodates", "contains" and "comprises"

¹ Surah Al-A'la Chapter 87 Verse 1

² Surah Al-Lail Chapter 92 Verse 20

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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﴾

Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Ever-Living, the One Who sustains and protects all that exists. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission? He knows what happens to them [His creatures] in this world and what will happen to them in the Hereafter. And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills. **His Kursi [footstool] extends over the heavens and the earth** and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.³

Kursi is mentioned only once in the Qur'an, in this verse.

The *kursi* transcends the heavens and the earth and, therefore, the universe.

THE TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD'S THRONE OVER HIS FOOTSTOOL

The Arabic word used in the following verses is *al-'arsh*, which means "the throne."

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٢٩﴾

But if they turn away, say [O Muhammad], "Allah is sufficient for me. None has the right to be worshipped but He. In Him, I have put my trust and He is the Lord of **the Mighty Throne**."⁴

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

Had there been therein [in the heavens and the earth] gods besides Allah, then verily both would have been ruined. Glorified is Allah, the Lord of **the Throne**, above all that they associate with Him!⁵

قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾

Say, "Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of **the Great Throne**?"⁶

³ Surah Al-Baqarah Chapter 2 Verse 255

⁴ Surah At-Tawbah Chapter 9 Verse 129

⁵ Surah Al-Anbiya' Chapter 21 Verse 22

⁶ Surah Al-Mu'minun Chapter 23 Verse 86

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فَتَعَلَى اللَّهِ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿١١٦﴾

So Exalted is Allah, the True King, the Truth: none has the right to be worshipped but He, the Lord of **the Supreme Throne**.⁷

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٦﴾

“Allah, none has the right to be worshipped but He, the Lord of **the Supreme Throne**.”⁸

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ



[He is Allah] Owner of High Ranks and Degrees, the Owner of **the Throne**. He sends the revelation by His Command to any of His slaves He wills that he may warn of the Day of Mutual Meeting [Day of Resurrection].⁹

سُبْحَنَ رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

Glorified is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of **the Throne**! Exalted is He from all that they ascribe [to Him].¹⁰

ذُو الْعَرْشِ الْمَجِيدُ ﴿٢٨﴾

Owner of **the Throne**, the Glorious.¹¹

ذِي قُوَّةٍ عِنْدَ ذِي الْعَرْشِ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

Owner of power [and high rank] with [Allah], the Lord of **the Throne**.¹²

By definition, the ‘arsh or the Throne, transcends the *kursi*, which is a mere footstool. This explains why God identifies Himself after the ‘arsh many times in the Qur’an, and does not identify Himself with the *kursi*.

Since the *kursi* transcends the universe, the ‘arsh must also transcend the universe.

⁷ Surah Al-Mu’minun Chapter 23 Verse 116

⁸ Surah An-Naml Chapter 27 Verse 26

⁹ Surah Ghafir Chapter 40 Verse 15

¹⁰ Surah Az-Zukhruf Chapter 43 Verse 82

¹¹ Surah Al-Buruj Chapter 85 Verse 15

¹² Surah At-Takwir Chapter 81 Verse 20

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THE TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD OVER THE THRONE

The Arabic words used here are:

- *al-'arsh*, which means "the throne;
- *istawa*, which means "took position," "became straight," "became equal" and "became upright."

Saheeh International Translation [SIT] translates *istawa* as "established above."

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ
مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

Indeed your Lord is God Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then **established Himself above the Throne**, arranging the matter [of His creation]. There is no intercessor except after His permission. That is God, your Lord, so worship Him. Then will you not remember?¹³

اللَّهُ الَّذِي رَفَعَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ
كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوقِنُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

It is God Who created the heavens without pillars that you [can] see; then **He established Himself above the Throne** and made subject the sun and the moon, each running [its course] for a specified term. He arranges [each] matter; He details the signs that you may, of the meeting with your Lord, be certain.¹⁴

الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾

The Most Merciful [who is] **above the Throne established**.¹⁵

الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ
فَسْئَلُ بِهِ خَيْرًا ﴿٢٣﴾

He Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six days and then **established Himself above the Throne** – the Most Merciful, so ask about Him one well-informed.¹⁶

¹³ SIT Surah Yunus Chapter 10 Verse 3

¹⁴ SIT Surah Ar-Ra'd Chapter 13 Verse 2

¹⁵ SIT Surah Ta Ha Chapter 20 Verse 5

¹⁶ SIT Surah Al-Furqan Chapter 25 Verse 59

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۚ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِهِ ۚ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ ۚ أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤﴾

*It is God Who created the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them in six days; then **He established Himself above the Throne**. You have not besides Him any protector or any intercessor; so will you not be reminded?*¹⁷

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيهَا ۚ وَهُوَ مَعَكُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٥﴾

*It is He Who created the heavens and earth in six days and then **established Himself above the Throne**. He knows what penetrates into the earth and what emerges from it and what descends from the heaven and what ascends therein; and He is with you wherever you are. And God, of what you do, is Seeing.*¹⁸

After creating the heavens and the earth, God established Himself above the 'arsh.

Therefore, God transcends the 'arsh which transcends the kursī which transcends the universe.

The Qur'an confirms the rationally derived attribute of God – transcendence.

¹⁷ SIT Surah As-Sajdah Chapter 32 Verse 4

¹⁸ SIT Surah Al-Hadeed Chapter 57 Verse 4