

258981 - Is it valid to interpret Allah's rising over the Throne (istiwa') as referring to sitting?

the question

is it allowed for a muslim to say Allah is sitting on the ursh? can we use the phrase "Allah while sitting on the ursh,..." is basically doing amazing things like how each person's face is different than the others? basically the person wasnt mocking Allah or anything but can we use the word sitting for Allah like Allah is sitting on the ursh or "Allah while sitting on the ursh"? a muslim i know was the one who said that statement, it is enough for him to ask Allah's forgiveness and not want to do it again, and he does not have to do anything more right?i only ask because speaking inappropriately about Allah is a very serious issue which some people out of the fold of islaam in certain situations right?is the above that type of situation or not?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

What is proven with regard to Allah, may He be exalted, is that He rose over His Throne (istiwa') in a manner that is befitting to His majesty and perfection, may He be glorified.

That is mentioned in seven places in the Book of Allah, including the verse (interpretation of the meaning):

"Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then rose over [astawa] the Throne" [al-A 'raaf 7:54].

The well-known interpretation of istiwa' is that it refers to exaltedness and elevation.

Al-Bukhaari said in his *Saheeh*: Chapter: *"and His Throne had been upon water"*, *"and He is the Lord of the Great Throne"*

Abu'l-'Aaliyah said: *"Then He Istawa (rose over) towards the heaven"* [Fussilat 41:11] means: He ascended to heaven.... Mujaahid said: *Astawa* means: He rose over the Throne.

Al-Baghawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: “*Then He Istawa (rose over) towards the heaven*”: Ibn ‘Abbaas and most of the commentaters among the early generations said: That is, He ascended to heaven. End quote from *Tafseer al-Baghawi* (1/78). This was narrated by al-Haafiz in *al-Fath* (13/41 7), and he said: Abu ‘Ubaydah, al-Farraa’ and others said something similar.

With regard to interpreting istiwa’ as referring to sitting, that is mentioned in some hadiths that are not sound.

But some of the early generations use this word to explain what is meant by istiwa’, as was narrated from Imam Khaarijah ibn Mus‘ab ad-Dab‘i. That was narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Ahmad in *as-Sunnah* (1/105).

Al-Haafiz ad-Daaraqutni mentioned sitting in some famous lines of poetry of his.

Assuming that this word was used by some of the early generations, we must believe that it is not like the sitting of any of Allah’s creation.

Shaykh al-Islam (may Allah have mercy on him) said: As is well established, when the angels and the souls of human beings are described in terms of moving, ascending, descending and so on, that is not like the movements of the bodies of human beings and other creatures that we see in this world; it is possible for them [angels or the souls of human beings] to move in ways that are not possible for the bodies of human beings. Therefore with regard to what is described in the case of Allah, it is more appropriate to say that it is possible and it is further removed from being like the descent of physical beings.

Moreover, His descent is not like the descent of the angels and the souls of human beings, even though that is closer [to His descent] than to the descent of their physical beings.

The sitting up of the deceased in his grave is not like the sitting up of the physical body. With regard to what is mentioned in the reports from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about sitting in the case of Allah, may He be exalted – such as the hadith of Ja’far ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him) and the hadith of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allah

be pleased with him) – it is more appropriate that it should not be like the sitting of physical beings. End quote from *Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa* (5/527).

However it is more appropriate to refrain from using this word, because it is not mentioned in the Qur’an or saheeh Sunnah, or in the words of the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them).

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: With regard to interpreting the istiwa’ of Allah, may He be exalted, over His Throne as referring to His settling on it, this is well known from the early generations, and was narrated by Ibn al-Qayyim in *an-Nooniyyah* and by others.

With regard to the idea of sitting, it was mentioned by some of them, but I feel uneasy about it. And Allah knows best. End quote from *Majmoo‘ Fataawa Ibn ‘Uthaymeen* (1/196).

Shaykh al-Barraak (may Allah preserve him) said: In some reports it is narrated that sitting is attributed to Allah, may He be exalted, and it says that He sits on His Kursi in whatever manner He, may He be glorified, wills. Some leading scholars have used this wording too.

The context of the words of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah gives the impression that istiwa’ (rising over) implies sitting.

But it is better to refrain from using this word, unless it is proven.

End quote from *Sharh ar-Risaalah at-Tadmuriyyah* (p. 188).

Based on the above:

We do not think that this word (sitting) should be used. Rather one should say that He rose (*astawa*) over the Throne, and istiwa’ is to be understood as referring to ascending and rising.

But if someone does use this word, which is narrated from some of the early generations, then he should not be denounced.

Rather it should be said to him: It is not appropriate to say this in front of the common folk, because it may cause confusion for them, and they may interpret it in a manner that likens Allah to His creation.

Thus it is clear that this expression does not constitute disbelief; rather it is an interpretation of the divine attribute of istiwa', and is a different opinion concerning it.

It is more appropriate to refrain from using this word.

And Allah knows best.