

## Faith versus Materialism; A Message From Ayat-ul-Kursi

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### Abstract

In between the terms "materialism" and "economic materialism", every religious scholar assume that both concepts are ideologically contradictory to the faith. This study interprets all seven parts of Ayat-ul-Kursi in this regard. By quoting various narrates of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Ali Ibn-e-Abu Talib and Fatima Zahra, this study looks at the questions of "what materialists and economic materialists believe regarding the socioeconomic development in this world", and "how Ayat-ul-Kursi rejects their concepts".

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## Introduction of Ayat-ul-Kursi

Some verses in Quran revealed from Allah clearly guiding not only the Muslims but the whole of mankind. These verses are so powerful that, some experts in mysticism assume them "Ism-e-Azam" (the biggest name, a way, a tool, or a key by which prayers are fulfilled). Similarly, their recitation is used to protect ourselves, our families and our assets from various evils or Satan and his followers (Abdulla, 2022).

Among such verses, there is the 255<sup>th</sup> verse of Surah Baqrah, called Ayat-ul-Kursi. Ayat-ul-Kursi means “the throne”. According to Abdullah Ibn-e-Masood (RA), Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “Allah the lofty did not create anything in the skies or on earth, in Jannat or Jahannam, Loftier than Ayatul Kursi”.

### Translation of Ayat-ul-Kursi

Although this is only one verse, theological experts divide this verse into further seven parts. Therefore, this study presents its translation into seven parts.

- 1) “Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence”.
- 2) “Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep”.
- 3) “To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth”.
- 4) “Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission”?
- 5) “He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills”.
- 6) “His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not”.
- 7) “And, He is the Highest, the Most Great” (Abdulla, 2022).

### Benefits of Ayat-ul-Kursi

Many benefits of Ayat al-Kursi have been discussed in the Quran and hadiths. However, this study is only emphasizing the references that provide no ideological contradiction between followers of some sects. Following are some of them

- Allah Almighty told Hazrat Musa (A.S), “If one recites it after every Namaz, the Almighty Allah will make his heart a thankful one, will give him a reward of the Prophets and his deeds will be like those of the truthful and nothing except death will stop will stop him from going into heaven”. (Ahmad, 2021)
- Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said; “These things increase one’s memory: sweets, the meat of an animal which is slaughtered in an Islamic manner near the neck, Lentils, cold bread and recitation of Ayatul Kursi” (Ahmad, 2021).
- Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said; “If one recites Ayatul Kursi before going to sleep, Allah will send an Angel to come and look after you and protect you” (Ahmad, 2021).
- Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, “if a person recites Ayatul Kursi after every obligatory prayer, He has the distance of death between him and the paradise.’ That is why it is of high importance to reading Ayatul Kursi” (Ahmad, 2021).
- Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated, “I have been given Aayat-ul-Kursi from the treasures under the Arsh of Allaah, and it was not given to anyone before me” (Ahmad, 2021).
- Ali Ibn-e-Abu Talib narrates, “I cannot understand how a person, who is a Muslim, and owner of reason (intellect) can spend the night without reading Ayatul Kursi. If you knew the benefits of it, then you will never discard it under any condition” (Ahmad, 2021).
- Fatima Zahra (a daughter of the Prophet Muhammad) narrates, “When the time approached for her delivery, then Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ordered Hazrat Umm-e-Salama and Hazrat Zainab to go to Fatima and recite Ayatul Kursi and ‘Inna Rabba Kumullaah....’ (the whole Ayat) and the last two Quls and blow on her” (Ahmad, 2021).

## What the Materialism is?

Theologians always believe that materialism is contradictory to faith. However, this study first looks at the definition of materialism.

Generally, “materialism” and “economic materialism” are two different concepts but Islamic jurists usually describe economic materialism as the rival concept to the faith. According to Russell W. Belk, materialism can be defined by three traits of any person;

- 1) Nongenerosity – an unwillingness to give or share possessions with others.
- 2) Envy – the desire for other people’s possessions.
- 3) Possessiveness – concern about the loss of possessions and a desire for greater control of ownership (Belk, 1985).

On the other hand, the term “materialism” is closely related to physicalism which means, “all that exists is ultimately physical” (Stack, 1998).

In both meanings, each part of Ayat-ul-Kursi provides rejecting the beliefs on physical things, as well as provides protection from nongenerosity (or intolerance), envy and possessiveness. Therefore, this study now evaluates each part of Ayat-ul-Kursi within the context of materialism versus faith.

## Explanation of Ayat-ul-Kursi within the Context of “Faith versus Materialism”

### Part 01

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Part 01 Translation</b>               | “Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [all] existence” (Abdulla, 2022).  |
| <b>Rejection of Materialism</b>          | Undoubtedly, Allah is not visible by the naked eye, but none other than Him is either the creator or owner of this world. Allah is the only one. Everything visible and physical, will cease to exist, but Allah was, is, and always will be (Habib, 2022). |
| <b>Rejection of Economic Materialism</b> | Only Allah can reward or punish man. All those causes which are apparently beneficial to you, neither they can harm you nor be beneficial to you without the will of Allah (Asim, 2022).  |

**Part 02**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Part 02 Translation</b>               | “Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep” (Abdulla, 2022).   |
| <b>Rejection of Materialism</b>          | A person has to be alert every moment to protect his life, property and honor. Sometimes, he hires a watchman or security guard who is responsible for keeping vigil on his boss’s assets at night. But, on the other side, Allah, who neither slumbers nor sleeps. He is aware of every action of his creation every moment (Habib, 2022).                   |
| <b>Rejection of Economic Materialism</b> | When a businessman comes home from the office, he is afraid that my office might be stolen or the workers in my factory might cause harm. As an example of "Ankh Ajhal, Pahar Ajhal" he always tries to keep his eyes on his business. But on the other hand, the owner of such an evil universe is Allah, who does not sleep and does not rest (Asim, 2022). |

**Part 03**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Part 03 Translation</b>               | “To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth” (Abdulla, 2022).   |
| <b>Rejection of Materialism</b>          | Allah is the owner of everything that man sees or is unable to see (Habib, 2022).   |
| <b>Rejection of Economic Materialism</b> | A businessman thinks that he earns by his own skills. But the truth is that whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth belongs to Allah. Allah gives abundantly to whomever He wills, and restricts the sustenance of whomever He wills. That is why, one should thank Allah in every way for whatever he has achieved (Asim, 2022). |

**Part 04**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Part 04 Translation</b>               | “Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission”? (Abdulla, 2022)  |
| <b>Rejection of Materialism</b>          | A person thinks that, if such a person will help him in his specific task or work, he would be beneficial. But the truth is that, no human being can help a person unless Allah wills it. It is only by Allah’s command that someone's heart inclines to help you (Habib, 2022).   |
| <b>Rejection of Economic Materialism</b> | A businessman sometimes seeks the recommendation of a top official or politician in dealing with exports or imports of a product. He thinks that if an officer supports him or a politician favors him, he can get some benefits, or his case can be solved. But he does not understand that no recommendation or favor can facilitate unless Allah wills it (Asim, 2022). |

**Part 05**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Part 05 Translation</b>               | “He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills” (Abdulla, 2022).  |
| <b>Rejection of Materialism</b>          | Whatever changes have taken place in the world, Allah knows everything. And how much the world will change now, that too Allah knows. Only Allah is the Revealer of all the knowledge (Habib, 2022).   |
| <b>Rejection of Economic Materialism</b> | An entrepreneur believes that all his strategies have brought him to the current level of development. Similarly, he assumes that his strategies can make him a successful businessman in the future as well. But the truth is that, Allah is the best planner. Allah has paved the way for his success in the past and will do the same in the future. Only Allah knows when what is beneficial for whom and when to reward someone with what (Asim, 2022). |

**Part 06**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Part 06 Translation</b>               | “His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not” (Abdulla, 2022).   |
| <b>Rejection of Materialism</b>          | The “reasons” that a man considers as the tools for his progress, are all the creation of Allah. Whatever is happening around us is possible only with the will of Allah. Allah never gets tired of protecting this universe and everything in it. When Allah protects, no one can harm anyone else (Habib, 2022).  |
| <b>Rejection of Economic Materialism</b> | All economic incentives and losses are by the command of Allah. It is the only Allah who fulfills our desires, gives us profits in business, it is Allah who gives us rewards and returns, and Allah never gets tired while giving all this. Just a person should keep praising Allah in every moment (Asim, 2022). |

**Part 07**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Part 07 Translation</b>               | “And, He is the Highest, the Most Great” (Abdulla, 2022).   |
| <b>Rejection of Materialism</b>          | Every visible change, progress or success is a blessing from Allah. It does not beautify Allah’s majesty that someone asks Him by dua, and He does not fulfill it. Yes, Allah’s wisdom is hidden in the acceptance of prayer, but Allah never returns anyone empty or unfulfilled (Habib, 2022).  |
| <b>Rejection of Economic Materialism</b> | Allah says that whoever spends one penny in his way, He gives him ten times more profit. That is why, it would not beautify Allah’s majesty that he who remembers the poor and needy by his wealth, how could Allah not remember him. Allah bestows more blessings and progress on the business of such people. In fact, the truth is that economic progress is actually hidden in the service of the poor and needy creatures of Allah (Asim, 2022). |

**Conclusion**

Since the ideological debates between Capitalism and Marxism, various Muslim scholars have also been inspired by western philosophies regarding either following the concept of “Tawakal<sup>1</sup>” or any materialist approach. Islam never denies starting any business or job but in between the teachings of Allah and his Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). However, whatever business or job that can detract a person from following basic Islamic teachings is forbidden. In the same manner, the whole Quran including Ayat-ul-Kursi teaches everyone whatever your economic or social ambitions, whatever your goals or targets, you cannot avail anything until the will of Allah. And, Allah’s will is only hidden in the “Tawakal” and “to serve poor and needy people”.

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<sup>1</sup> Arabic word, means just to rely on Allah in each matter (Habib, 2022).

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