11035 - Is Allah above the Throne?

the question

The Quran says (what means) "Angels and Gabriel ascend to Allah in a day equivalent to 5000 terrestrial years.” Does this imply that Allah is controlling the earthly matters sitting on the Throne? Then how can it be that Allah is nearer to us than the veins?

Summary of answer

It is proven in the Quran and Sunnah and by the consensus of the Salaf that Allah is above His heavens over His Throne (as befits His Majesty), and that He is the Exalted, Most High. He is above all things, and there is nothing that is above Him.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is Allah above the Throne?

It is proven in the Quran and Sunnah (prophetic teachings) and by the consensus of the Salaf (early generations) of this Ummah (global Islamic nation) that Allah is above His heavens over His Throne (as befits His Majesty), and that He is the Exalted, Most High. He is above all things, and there is nothing that is above Him. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Allah, it is He Who has created the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them in six days. Then He rose over (istawa) the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty). You (mankind) have none, besides Him, as a Wali (protector or helper) or an intercessor. Will you not then remember (or receive admonition)?} [As-Sajdah 32:4]

{Surely, your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rose over

(istawa) the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty), disposing the affair of all things.} [Yunus 10:3]

{To Him ascend (all) the goodly words, and the righteous deeds exalt it (i.e. the goodly words are not accepted by Allah unless and until they are followed by good deeds).} [Fatir 35:10]

"He is the First (nothing is before Him) and the Last (nothing is after Him), the Most High (nothing is above Him) and the Most Near (nothing is nearer than Him).} [Al-Hadid 57:3]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "You are the Most High and there is nothing above You…"

There are many similar verses and prophetic narrations. But at the same time, Allah tells us that He is with His slaves wherever they are:

{Have you not seen that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth? There is no najwa (secret counsel) of three but He is their fourth (with His Knowledge, while He Himself is over the Throne, over the seventh heaven), — nor of five but He is their sixth (with His Knowledge), — nor of less than that or more but He is with them (with His Knowledge) wheresoever they may be.} [Al-Mujadalah 58:7]

Allah has combined mention of His being above His Throne with mention of His being with His slaves in one ayah (verse), where He says (interpretation of the meaning):

{He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rose over (istawa) the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty) . He knows what goes into the earth and what comes forth from it, and what descends from the heaven and what ascends thereto. And He is with you (by His Knowledge) wheresoever you may be.} [Al-Hadid 57:4]

How is Allah close to us?

Saying that Allah is with us does not mean that He is mixed with (or dwells in) His creation; rather He is with His slaves by His knowledge. He is above His Throne and nothing is hidden from Him of

what they do. With regard to the verse (interpretation of the meaning):

{And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein (by Our Knowledge).} [Qaf 50:16]

Most of the exegetists said that what is meant is that He is near by means of His angels whose task it is to record people's deeds. And those who said that it means that He is near explained it as meaning that He is near by His knowledge, as is said concerning how He is with us.

This is the view of Ahl As-Sunnah wal-Jama`ah (followers of prophetic guidance), who affirm that Allah is above His creation and that He is also with His slaves, and they state that He is far above dwelling in His created beings.

With regard to the denial of all Divine attributes as voiced by the Jahmiyyah (a deviant sect) and their followers, they deny that His Essence is above His creatures and that He rose above His Throne, and they say that He is present in His Essence everywhere. We ask Allah to guide the Muslims.

And Allah knows best.