

# **Al-Rahman** [The Most Merciful] **Madinan Period**

*In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate*

[1] The Merciful One

[2] has taught the Qur'an,

[3] has created man,

[4] and has taught him articulate speech.

[5] The sun and the moon follow a reckoning,

[6] and the stars and the trees all prostrate themselves,<sup>1</sup>

[7] and He has raised up the heaven and has set a balance<sup>2</sup>

[8] that you may not transgress in the balance,

[9] but weigh things equitably and skimp not in the balance.<sup>3</sup>

*1. That is, the entire Universe is bound in obedience to God. Nothing, not even the sun and the moon, nor the stars and trees may deviate from this even by as much as a hair's breadth.*

*2. Almost all Qur'anic commentators have interpreted the word **mizan** (balance) used here to signify justice. As for the words "... set the balance," they have been interpreted to mean that God made justice embrace the entire Universe.*

*3. The thrust of the statement is that since man lives in a balanced Universe, one whose entire system is based on justice, he too should adhere to justice. For if he acts unjustly within the sphere in which he has been granted choice, it will be discordant with the very grain of the Universe.*

[10] And He has set up the earth for all beings.

[11] Therein are fruit and palm-trees with their dates in sheaths,

[12] and a variety of corn with both husk and grain.

[13] Which of the bounties<sup>4</sup> of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[14] He has created man from dry, rotten clay like the potter's,

[15] and has created the **jinn** from the flame of fire.

[16] Which of the wonders of your Lord's power will you twain - you men and **jinn** -then deny?

[17] Lord of the two easts and of the two wests<sup>5</sup> is He.

[18] Which of the powers of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[19] He unleashed the two seas so that they merge together,

[20] and yet there is a barrier between them which they may not overstep.

[21] Which of the wonders of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** – then deny?

[22] From these seas come forth pearls and coral.

[23] Which of the wonders of your Lord's power will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

*4. The word used here is **ala'**, which forms part of the refrain that occurs again and again in this **surah**. Instead of strictly adhering to one equivalent of this word, we have translated it variously depending on the context in which this word occurs. Thus sometimes we have used the word "wonders" for the word **ala'** (v. 16); on other occasions we have used "favours" (v. 25), and also "laudable attributes" (V. 30).*

*5. The expression "Lord of the two easts and of the two wests" possibly means the two points of sunrise and the two points of sunset on the shortest and longest days in winter and summer. Another possible meaning could be the easts and the Wests of the two hemispheres of the earth.*

[24] His are the ships, towering on the sea like mountains.

[25] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain – you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[26] All that is on earth will perish,

[27] only the Person of your Lord, full of majesty and splendour, will endure.

[28] So which of the wonders of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn**-then deny?

[29] All in the heavens and the earth entreat Him for their needs; a new, mighty task engages Him each day.<sup>6</sup>

[30] Which of your Lord's laudable attributes will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[31] O you twain, who are a burden (on the earth),<sup>7</sup> We shall attend to you and call you to account.<sup>8</sup>

6. *God is continually engaged in the governance of the Universe and each moment He brings into existence countless beings in ever-new forms and shapes and with a variety of properties. His Universe is not a static Universe; it changes moment by moment, and each time its Creator brings it out in new shapes and forms that vary from all previous shapes and forms.*

7. ***Thaqal** denotes the burden placed on a vehicle. **Thaqalan** is in the dual form and therefore means: "two loaded burdens". Here, this word is used to signify **jinn** and humans who are both loaded on the earth. Now, since the present discourse refers to those **jinn** and humans who are deviant and do not render service and obedience to their Lord, they are addressed as follows: "O you twain, who are a burden (on the earth)." In other words, humans and **jinn** are being warned that God will turn His attention to them and take them to task.*

8. *This verse should not be understood to mean that at that time God was too occupied with other tasks to call His negligent servants to account. Rather, it means that God has set a specific time to call humans to their final accounting, and that time has not yet arrived.*

[32] (We shall then see), which of the favours of your Lord will you twain- you men and **jinn** -then deny?

[33] O company of jinn and men, if you have the power to go beyond the bounds of the heavens and the earth, go beyond them! Yet you will be unable to go beyond them for that requires infinite power.<sup>9</sup>

[34] Which of your Lord's powers will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[35] (If you so venture) a flame of fire and smoke shall be lashed at you, which you shall be unable to withstand.

[36] Which of your Lord's powers will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[37] (What will happen) when the heaven will be split asunder<sup>10</sup> and will become crimson like leather?

[38] Which of your Lord's powers will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[39] On that Day there will be no need to ask either men or **jinn** about their sins.

[40] (We shall see) which of the favours of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

9. *The expression "the bounds of the heavens and the earth" in this verse signifies the entire Universe which is a part of God's realm. The purpose of the verse is to stress that it is beyond man's power to escape God's grip. When the time for accountability, about which they are being warned, arrives, they will be seized wherever they might be and will be mustered to God. If they want to escape God's grip, there is only one way to do so: to flee from the Universe itself for the whole of it is entirely under God's control. But doubtlessly man does not have the power to do so and if anyone entertains any vain illusion in that regard, they are challenged to test their power.*

10. *The splitting asunder of the heaven signifies the loosening of the bonds that hold the celestial system together, the disruption of the cosmic order, and the scattering away of stars and planets.*

[41] The culprits shall be known by their marks, and shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet.

[42] Which of the powers of your Lord, will you twain - you men and **jinn** -then deny?

[43] (It will be said): "This is the Hell that the culprits had cried lies to.

[44] They will keep circling around between Hell and boiling water.

[45] Which of your Lord's powers will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[46] For any who fears to stand before his Lord<sup>11</sup> are two Gardens.

[47] Which of your Lord's favours will you twain - you men and **jinn** -then deny?

[48] These Gardens will abound in green, blooming branches.

[49] Which of your Lord's favours will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[50] In each of the two Gardens are two flowing springs,

[51] Which of your Lord's favours will you twain - you men and **jinn** –then deny?

[52] In both these is a pair of every fruit.<sup>12</sup>

11. *The expression: "For any who fears to stand before his Lord" refers to those who lived in the world being God-fearing, who always worked with the consciousness that they would one Day be made to stand before God and have to render an account of their deeds to Him.*

12. *This verse can be understood in one of two ways. First, it might be taken to mean that the fruit of each of the two Gardens will be unique. In each Garden there will be fruits of a special quality clustering on branches; and in the other Garden, there will be fruits of a different kind. Second, that a person will find in one Garden one kind of fruit with which he was familiar and had tasted during his worldly life, though in the Hereafter they will be infinitely better. There will, however, also be another kind of fruit with which he was not at all acquainted in the world and which is beyond his imagination.*

[53] Which of your Lord's favours will you twain – you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[54] They shall recline on couches lined with brocade, and within reach shall hang the fruits of the two Gardens.

[55] Which of your Lord's favours will you twain - you men and jinn -then deny?

[56] In the midst of these shall be maidens with modest, restrained glances;<sup>13</sup> maidens whom no man or **jinn** has ever touched before.<sup>14</sup>

[57] Which of your Lord's favours will you twain -you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[58] Lovely as rubies and pearls.

[59] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** –then deny?

[60] Can the reward of goodness be any other than goodness?

[61] Which of the laudable attributes of your Lord will you twain- you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[62] And besides these two there shall be two other Gardens.<sup>15</sup>

*13. This is the true quality of womenfolk: that instead of being immodest and unabashed, they should be bashful. This explains why God, in the course of His depiction of the women of Paradise, accords priority to landing their modesty and chastity rather than praising them for their beauty and attractiveness. One can find beautiful women the world over: in promiscuous clubs and film studios and carnivals of beauty where none but the most beautiful are able to find their way. Yet such women can only be the favourites of people of decadent taste and depraved character. Women who seek to attract the attention of corrupt men and are ready to jump into every lustful man's lap have no appeal for decent people.*

*14. This indicates that like righteous humans, upright **jinn** will also be admitted to Paradise and granted female companions of their own species. Furthermore, thanks to God's infinite power, all of them shall be made virgins, "maidens whom no man or **jinn** has ever touched before".*

*15. Probably the first two Gardens will serve the purpose of lodging whereas the other two will be for purposes of recreation and entertainment.*

[63] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** -then deny?

[64] Two Gardens, dark green and fresh.

[65] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain- you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[66] In them will be two gushing springs.

[67] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[68] Therein will be fruits and dates and pomegranates.

[69] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** -then deny?

[70] In the midst of these will be maidens, good and comely.

[71] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain – you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[72] There shall be maidens sheltered in tents.<sup>16</sup>

[73] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** - then deny?

[74] No man or **jinn** ever touched them before.

[75] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** -then deny?

[76] They shall be reclining on green cushions and splendid carpets.

[77] Which of the favours of your Lord will you twain - you men and **jinn** – then deny?

[78] Blessed be the name of your Lord, the Lord of Majesty and Glory.

**16.** *These tents will possibly resemble those erected in recreational resorts earmarked for the eminent and affluent. Paradise will be full of tents wherein there will be young maidens to provide recreation and delight.*