

Al-Mulk [Dominion] **Makkan Period**

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

[1] Blessed is He in Whose Hand is the dominion of the Universe, and Who has power over everything;¹

[2] Who created death and life that He might try you as to which of you is better in deed.² He is the Most Mighty, the Most Forgiving;

[3] Who created the seven heavens one upon another. You will see no incongruity in the Merciful One's creation.³ Turn your vision again, can you see any flaw?⁴

[4] Then turn your vision again, and then again; in the end your vision will come back to you, worn out and frustrated.

1. God can do whatever He pleases; there is no way to strip Him of His power or to prevent Him from doing what He wills.

2. The purpose underlying the whole system of human beings' life and death is to ascertain who of them are best in their deeds.

*3. Literally, **tafawut** means disharmony a thing's discordance with something else.*

*4. The word **futur** denotes crack, rift, fissure, cleaving, or breaking apart. The verse means that the whole Universe is so well-knit together and everything in it, from a particle on the earth to the enormous galaxies, is so coherent and so well connected that no matter how hard one might try one can find neither flaw nor crack in the system.*

[5] We have adorned the lower heaven⁵ with lamps, and have made them a means to drive away the satans. We have prepared for them the chastisement of the Blazing Fire.

[6] The chastisement of Hell awaits those who disbelieve in their Lord, What a wretched destination!

[7] When they will be cast into it, they will hear it roar⁶ as it boils,

[8] as though it will burst with rage. Every time a multitude is cast into it, its keepers will ask them: "Did no warner come to you?"

[9] They will say: "Yes, a warner came to us, but we gave the lie to him and said: 'Allah has revealed nothing. You are surely in huge error.'

[10] They will say: If we had only listened and understood, we would not be among the inmates of the Blazing Fire."

[11] Thus will they confess their sins. Damned are these inmates of the Blazing Fire.

[12] Surely forgiveness and a mighty reward await those who fear Allah without seeing Him.

[13] Whether you speak in secrecy or aloud, (it is all the same to Allah). He even knows the secrets that lie hidden in the breasts of people.

[14] Would He not know, He Who has created,⁷ when He is All-Subtle, All-Aware?

5. "The lower heaven" denotes the heaven whose stars and planets can be observed with the naked eye without recourse to any mechanical aid such as a telescope.

6. This might refer either to the sound of Hell itself, to the sound rising from it, or to the sound of those who were cast in it and who would therefore be crying and screaming.

7. An alternative translation could be: "Would He not know His Own creatures?"

[15] He it is Who made the earth subservient to you. So traverse in its tracks and partake of the sustenance He has provided. To Him will you be resurrected.

[16] Do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven will not cause the earth to cave in with you, and then suddenly it will begin to rock violently?

[17] Do you feel secure that He Who is in the heaven⁸ will not let loose upon you a storm of stones? Then shall you know what My warning is like!

[18] Those who came before them also gave the lie (to the Messengers): then how awesome was My chastisement!

[19] Have they not seen birds above them spreading and closing their wings, with none holding them except the Merciful One? He oversees everything.

[20] Which is your army that will come to your aid against the Merciful Lord?⁹ But the unbelievers are in utter delusion.

8. This does not mean that God lives, literally, in the heavens. The present verse reflects the fact that when man wants to turn to God, he instinctively looks up to the heavens. Furthermore, when he prays to God, he raises his hands towards the heaven. Likewise, when he is overpowered with affliction and feels helpless, he again turns upwards to the heavens to convey his grievance to God; or when a misfortune suddenly befalls him, he tends to say that it has descended on him from heaven, In the same way when he receives something in an extraordinary way, he says that it has come from heaven. Again, the scriptures revealed by God are called heavenly books. All this indicates that it is a part of man's nature that when he thinks of God, he associates Him with the heavens above rather than with the earth below.

9. An alternative translation would be: "Who is there other than the Merciful Lord Who comes to your aid as would your own army?"

[21] Who shall provide for you if He withholds His sustenance? Nay; but they persist in rebellion and aversion.

[22] Who is better guided: he who walks grovelling on his face,¹⁰ or he who walks upright on a Straight Path?

[23] Say: "He it is Who has brought you into being, and has given you hearing and sight, and has given you hearts to think and understand. How seldom do you give thanks!"¹¹

[24] Say: "Allah it is Who multiplied you in the earth and to Him you will be mustered. "

[25] They say: "If you are truthful, tell us when will this promise (of the Hereafter) be fulfilled?"

[26] Say: "Allah alone knows about that; and I am no more than a plain warner."

[27] When they will see it near at hand, the faces of all those who had denied it will be distraught, and then they will be told: "This is the doom which you used to ask for."

[28] Say to them: "Did you ever consider: whether Allah destroys me and those that are with me, or shows mercy to us, who can protect the unbelievers from a grievous chastisement?"¹²

10. The expression "...who walks grovelling on his face" brings to mind an image of cattle with their heads cast down, trudging along the course on which they have been put.

11. God has endowed human beings with knowledge and intelligence, sight and hearing so that they might arrive at the Truth. But they are ungrateful in so far as they use these endowments for all kinds of purposes except the one for which they were supposed to be used - to know the Truth!

12. When the Prophet (peace be on him) embarked on his mission in Makkah and the members of the different Quraysh families started embracing Islam, the people of many a household began to curse him and his Companions. They even resorted to the use of magic and charms in their bid to exterminate him. They also hatched conspiracies designed to assassinate him. It was in this context that they were told that it was not really important for them whether the Prophet (peace be on him) died or continued to live. They should rather be concerned with themselves, thinking about how they will save themselves from God's chastisement.

[29] Say to them: "He is Merciful, and it is in Him that we believe, and it is in Him that We put all our trust. Soon will you know who is in manifest error."

[30] Say to them: "Did you even consider: if all the water that you have (in the wells) were to sink down into the depths of the earth, who will produce for you clear, flowing Water?"