

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

UNDER HIS DOMINION: TAFSIR OF SURAH AL-MULK



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The purpose of reciting the Quran is for **tadabbur**, which is deep reflection to extract guidance and for **tadhakkur** which is being reminded of Allah.

Facts about Surah al-Mulk

- **Name:** al-Mulk which means Dominion, Sovereignty, Power, Ownership
- **Theme:** Allah's Might, His Oneness, and the reality of the Hereafter
- **Revelation:** Makkan; early prophethood
- **Placement:** 67th surah; first surah of Juz' 29
- **Reported order of revelation:** after surah al-Muimminon, before surah al-Haqqah (in some tafsir)
- **Other names of surah al-Mulk:**
 - **الواقية** (al-Waqi'ah): the Protector
 - **المنجية** (al-Munjiya): the Savior
 - **المجادلة** (al-Mujadilah): the Defender (Ibn Abbas (RA) says it argues for its reciter in the grave)
- **Connection to the Grave:** This surah protects the believer from that punishment when recited regularly.
- **Virtues:** The Prophet ﷺ said: "A surah of the Quran containing thirty verses will intercede for its companion until he is forgiven. It is **تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ**

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Blessed is the One in whose hands rest rest all authority and He is most capable of everything (1)

- تَبْرَكَ comes from ب ر ك (barakah): abundant goodness and increase; a form of praising Allah.
- بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ: Allah SWT alone owns, controls, and governs everything.
 - يَد is from the متشابهات which are affirmed without asking how, in a manner befitting His Majesty.
 - الْمُلْكُ means dominion, kingship, ownership, and absolute authority.
- Allah SWT's names are الْمُلْكُ (al-Mulk) the One with complete sovereignty, الْمَلِكُ (al-Malik) the King, and الْمَلِكُ (al-Maalik) the Owner.
- Ibn Abbas (RA) says: "Allah honors, disgraces, gives life, causes death, enriches, and withholds all by His command."
- Ibn Kathir says: No one can reverse His decree.
- وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ: Allah SWT power is limitless; whatever He will occurs.
- The name al-Qadir appears 45 times in the Quran, emphasizing His perfect power.
- This verse affirms four truths:
 - **Allah SWT exists**
 - **He is perfect and exalted**
 - **He alone owns and control everything**
 - **He is all-powerful**

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ

He is the One who created death and life in order to test which of you is best in deeds and He is the Almighty Alforgiving (2)

- الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ: scholars explain that death is not non-existence; it is the removal of the soul and its transfer to another realm.

- In another verse Allah SWT says:

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا

"He is the One who takes the souls at death." (al-Zumar 39:42)

- Death (الْمَوْت) is mentioned before life (الْحَيَاة) because it creates urgency and reminds us that life is short.
- The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Death is sufficient as a preacher."

And in another narration: *"Frequently remember the destroyer of pleasure: death."*

- لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا: to test who is best in deeds. This test is about quality and not quantity.
 - On the day of Judgement, deeds are weighed, not counted.
 - Ibn Umar RA: *"The best deeds are avoiding what Allah forbids and being ready to obey Him."*
- Allah's SWT names **الْعَزِيزُ**: the Almighty; absolute power, dominance, and authority. **الْغَفُورُ**: the Constantly Forgiving: pardons, excuses, and shows mercy.
 - This pairing shows: Allah **can** punish with full power. Yet He **chooses** to forgive continuously.
- People often feel unworthy of forgiveness, but Allah SWT rejects this attitude; as Allah SWT says:

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

"Whoever does evil or wrongs himself, then seeks Allah's forgiveness, will find Allah Forgiving and Merciful." (al-Nisa 4:110)

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفْوُتٍ فَأَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ

He is the one who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the most compassionate, so look again do you see any flaws? (3)

- الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ: Allah SWT created the seven heavens from nothing unlike humans who build from existing materials.

- **طَبَاقًا**: the heavens are layered one above another; their exact nature is known only to Allah SWT.
 - Human theories about the universe change, but revelation affirms seven heavens with certainty.
 - This verse shifts our attention to the **vastness of creation**, reminding us of our **smallness and cultivating humility**.
- **مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَاوُتٍ**: there is no imperfection in Allah SWT's creation; it is precise, balances, and flawless.
 - The name **الرَّحْمَنِ** highlights that the beauty and order of the universe are signs of Allah SWT's limitless mercy.
- **فَأَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ**: look again at the sky, do you see any flaws, cracks, or weaknesses?
 - Imam al-Ghazali notes that even the simplest mind, if it reflects on the marvels of the heavens, earth, plants, and animals, should recognize that such precise order must have a Maker who designed and directed it.

ثُمَّ أَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ

Then look again and again, your sight will return frustrated and weary (4)

- **ثُمَّ أَرْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ**: Allah SWT commands us to keep looking at the heavens to reflect repeatedly on their vastness and perfection.
- Verses 3 and 4 together highlight Allah SWT as **الخالق**: the Absolute Creator, the One who brings everything into existence with precision.
 - The seven heavens are perfectly layered, and the repeated inspection will only return the eye tired, defeated, and unable to find any imperfection.
- The Quran affirms:
 - **اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ**: Allah SWT is the Creator of all things. (Surah al-Zumar 39:62)
 - **هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ الْبَارِي الْمُصَوِّرُ**: He is the Creator, Originator, and Fashioner. (Surah al-Hashr 59:24)

- **يَنْقَلِبُ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ**: the eye comes back frustrated (unable to find a flaw) and weary (exhausted from trying).

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ
And indeed we adorned the lowest heaven with stars like lamps and made them as missiles for stoning eavesdropping devils, for whom we have also prepared the torment of the Blaze (5)

- **وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ**: Allah SWT beautified the nearest heaven with **مَصَابِيحَ**: stars and celestial bodies that illuminate the night like lamps.
 - **زَيَّنَّا** means Allah SWT decorated and adorned the sky, directing our hearts to appreciate His beauty and power.
 - Stars also serve another purpose:
 - **وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ**: they become missiles (**رُجُومًا**) that drive away devils who try to eavesdrop on the conversations of the angels.
 - This belongs to **عَالَمُ الْغَيْ**: the unseen world that we believe in as part of our eman.
 - The Quran confirms this in other chapters:

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ إِلَّا مَنْ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ مُبِينٌ

Indeed, We have placed constellations in the sky, and adorned it for all to see. And We protected it from every accursed devil, except the one eavesdropping, who is then pursued by a visible flare. (Surah al-Hijr 15:16-18)

إنا زيننا السماء الدنيا بزينة الكواكب وحفظنا من كل شيطان مارد لا يسمعون إلى الملا الأعلى ويقذفون من كل جانب دحورا ولهم عذاب واصل إلا من خطف الخطفة فأتبعه شهاب ثاقب

Indeed, We have adorned the lowest heaven with the stars for decoration and 'for' protection from every rebellious devil. They cannot listen to the highest assembly 'of angels' for they are pelted from every side 'fiercely' driven away.

And they will suffer an everlasting torment. But whoever manages to stealthily eavesdrop is 'instantly' pursued by a piercing flare (Surah al-Saffat 37: 6-10)

- these verses explain devils who attempt to steal information are pursued by a blazing flame.
- Ibn Abbas (RA) narrated that the Prophet ﷺ explained shooting stars as part of this unseen reality: devils may catch a fragment of truth but mix it with many lies, which is the basis of fortune-telling.
- Qatadah said the stars were created for three purposes:
 - **To beauty the sky**
 - **To stone devils**
 - **As signs for navigation on land and sea**
- وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ: devils who persist in this are prepared for the punishment of the Blaze.
- Reflecting on the stars and the heavens strengthens iman, and the scientific explanation of shooting stars does not contradict revelation; Islam sees nature and science as part of tawheed, not separate from it.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَيُسَّ السَّعِيرِ

Those who disbelieve in their Lord will suffer the punishment of hell, what a horrible and evil destination (6)

- This verse continues from the previous one وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ, just as devils face punishment for their rebellion, **disbelievers** also face the punishment of Hell in the Hereafter.
- وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ: refers to those who knowingly reject Allah SWT's existence, Oneness, or message, including those who deny His prophets, His attributes, or the Hereafter.
 - The term **kafir** is not an insult, it is a classification in the Quran, just as people are classified as believers or disbelievers.
- Disbelief has different forms:
 - Denying Allah entirely (atheism)

- Denying some of His attributes
- Associating partners with Him
- Believing in Allah SWT but rejecting His messengers
- Rejecting any definitive belief or practice of Islam
- **عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَبُئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ**: this emphasizes the severity of the outcome which is Hell and it will be a terrible, evil, and horrific destination for those who persist in rejecting their Lord.

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهِيْقًا وَهِيَ تَفُوْرٌ

When they are thrown into it, they will hear its roaring as it boils (7)

- Being thrown into Hell signifies the ultimate humiliation and disgrace for those who were arrogant and proud in this world.
- Hell is described as if it were a living, raging creature, making terrifying sounds.
- **شَهِيْقًا**: refers to a violent **inhalation**, the harsh sound of a donkey, or the furious breathing of someone overwhelmed with anger.
 - This sound represents Hell's **rage** toward those who denied Allah SWT and rejected the truth.
 - The roaring and boiling of Hell intensifies as the disbelievers are cast into it, just as a blazing fire flares when something is thrown into it.
- The verse emphasizes the **terror, anger, and boiling fury** of Hell as it receives those who rejected their Lord.

تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْْظِ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ

Almost bursting in fury, every time a group is cast into it, its keepers will ask them did a warner not come to you? (8)

- **الْغَيْْظِ**: means intense rage, the most severe form of anger showing Hell's violent fury toward those cast into it.
- Hell is described as if it is about to burst from anger because of the disbelief and rebellion of its inhabitants.
- Every time a group is thrown in, the **keepers of Hell** (the 19

- angels known as *khazanat Jahannam*) question them: “Did a warner not come to you?”
 - This question is rhetorical which is a reminder that prophets and messengers were sent, warnings were given, and disbelief was a conscious choice.
- This verse highlights both the **severity of Hell's anger** and the **justice** of Allah, no one is punished without having been warned.

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنَّا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ
They reply: Yes, a warner did come to us. But we denied and said: Allah has not revealed anything. You are extremely astray. (9)

- The disbelievers cannot offer any excuse when questioned by the keepers of Hell. As they are being thrown into Hellfire, they now see its anger, rage, and boiling fury.
- The keepers of Hell ask them: “**Didn’t a warner come to you?**”
 Their response
 - **Yes, a warner did come,**
 - **But we denied him,**
 - And we claimed: “**Allah has not revealed anything.**”
- They admit that they rejected the truth despite being warned, but now it is **too late**, as they are already being cast into the Fire.

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ
And they will lament: If only we had listened and reasoned, we would not be among the residents of the Blaze (10)

فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ
They will confess their sins, so away with the residents of the Blaze (11)

- The disbelievers will admit their sins, but their confession comes too late, as they are already facing the punishment of the Blaze.
- After describing the punishment of the non-believers, Allah suddenly shifts to describing the believers and their reward.

- This reflects a unique Quranic style:
 - **الترhib al-tarhib** instilling fear through warnings
 - **الترghib al-targhib** encouraging goodness, hope, and turning to Allah SWT for mercy, grace, pardon, and forgiveness
- Whenever the Quran mentions punishment, it often follows with reward, creating a balance between fear and hope.
- Scholars explain that true faith exists between fear and hope, fearing Allah SWT's displeasure while hoping for His mercy.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

Indeed those in awe of their lord without seeing Him, for them is forgiveness and they will have a great reward (12)

- This fear (يَخْشَوْنَ) is a fear of born from **love**, as loving Allah SWT deeply one feels **shame and embarrassment** to disobey Him.
- وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ: the "great reward" mentioned by mufasssirun refers to Jannah.
- مَغْفِرَةٌ (forgiveness) is mentioned before أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ (the great reward) because **forgiveness is the key to entering Paradise.**

وَأَسْرُوءَ قَوْلِكُمْ أَوْ أَجْهَرُوهَا بِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

Whether you speak secretly or openly he surely knows best what is hidden in the heart (13)

- This refers to the mushrikeen of Makkah, who would gather at night to speak ill of the Prophet ﷺ and the believers, plotting in secret.
- Allah SWT tells them: **وَأَسْرُوءَ قَوْلِكُمْ أَوْ أَجْهَرُوهَا بِهِ** whether you speak **openly or privately**, He knows it all.
- إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ: Allah SWT knows what is hidden deep inside the heart,
- This is also a **warning to us**: Allah hears everything, public or private, because He knows what lies within our hearts,

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

How could He not know His own creation for He alone is the most subtle All-Aware? (14)

- Allah SWT asks a rhetorical question: *How could the Creator not know His creation?*
- **اللَّطِيفُ**: the Most Subtle, the Most Gentle.
- **الْخَبِيرُ**: the All-Aware, fully knowing every detail of His creation.

