

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

UNDER HIS DOMINION: TAFSIR OF SURAH AL-MULK



Shaykh Ahmed Billoo

SESSION 2

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ
He is the One who made earth tame for you , so walk in its pathways, eat from His provision, and to Him is the resurrection and spreading (15)

- هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ: the word لَكُمْ comes before الْأَرْضَ to show that Allah SWT made the earth specifically for our benefit.
- ذَلُولًا: indicates something made extremely tame, subservient, and easy.
- Some mufassirin explain that the earth's original nature is to shake, as in "إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا" (Az-Zalzalah 99:1), but Allah SWT subdued it for us as a mercy and blessing.
- The earth being tame should remind us of our origin from the earth and make us humble.
- فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا: means walk its pathways.
 - For worldly matters, Allah SWT uses lighter words like "walk/move."
 - For spiritual matters, He uses stronger words:
 - فَاسْعَوْا (hasten)
 - سَارِعُوا (race)
 - فَفِرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ (flee to Allah, which is the strongest form)
 - Worldly matters: take them with calmness, consultation, and ease.
 - Hereafter: rush, strive, and flee toward Allah SWT's pleasure and forgiveness.

- وَكُلُوا مِنْ رِزْقِهِ: reminds us that provision is **Allah SWT**, not ours.
 - Seeking sustenance (work, education, earning) becomes a **form of worship**.
 - Eating **pure and permissible** food helps a person perform righteous deeds, while impure food becomes a pathway for shaytan to mislead.
- **البعث** (resurrection) and **النشور** (spreading):
 - When used alone, each word includes both meanings.
 - If used together, **البعث** = resurrection, **النشور** = spreading forth.
- وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ: reminds us that life is not just about eating, earning, and consuming, which is the ultimate “spreading” is when we **stand before Allah**.

ءَأَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ

Do you feel secure that the One who is above the heavens will not cause the earth to swallow you, and then it would shake violently? (16)

- Allah SWT reminds us that He can punish in different ways.
- أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمْ الْأَرْضَ: He can cause the earth to swallow people, as He did with Qarun.
- فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ: the earth would shake rapidly and violently.
- These verses warn against feeling safe and secure from Allah SWT’s punishment.

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مَّنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ

Or do you feel secure that the One above the heavens will not send against you a storm of stones? Then you will know how My warning is (17)

- **حَاصِبًا**: is a violent storm carrying stones.
 - Allah SWT reminds the disbelievers that the **earth and sky**, though blessings, can become **punishments** if He wills.
- Earlier verses asked: “Did a warner come to you?”
 - They rejected the warning. So when the punishment comes:

- فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرٍ: they will finally understand how serious the warning was.
- Aisha (RA) described the Prophet ﷺ:
 - He was usually cheerful and smiling.
 - But when he saw a **cloud or wind**, his face would change and he would become uneasy.
 - He explained that previous nations were punished by winds and storms, and he feared that such punishments could descend.
 - People of Aad saw a cloud and said, "This will bring us rain," but it was actually a **painful punishment**.
 - The Prophet ﷺ taught that a believer should **never feel completely safe** from Allah SWT's punishment.

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ

Previously, people denied and rejected, how was my reproach? (18)

- Allah SWT reminds the disbelievers that previous nations also denied and rejected, and each was punished in a different way.
- In surah Al-Ankabut, Allah says:

فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذَنْبِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا

"We seized each of them for their sin; and among them were those upon whom We sent a storm of stones" (Surah Al-Ankabut 29:40)

- Some were punished with a **storm of stones** (like the people of Lut and the army of Abraha).
- Some were destroyed by a **blast**.
- Some were **swallowed by the earth**.
- Some were **drowned**, like Firawn.
- Allah SWT clarifies:

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ
Allah SWT did not wrong them they wronged themselves through their disbelief and rejection. (Surah al-Ankabut 29:40)

- The verse warns that just as Allah SWT punished earlier nations, He is fully able to punish those who deny today.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَفَتْ وَيَقْبِضْنَ مَا يُمَسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
بَصِيرٌ

Have they not considered the birds above them, with wings outspread and sometimes folded? None holds them up except the Most Merciful. Indeed, He sees everything (19)

- After mentioning punishments like the earth swallowing people or storms of stones, Allah SWT shifts to a sign of mercy and reflection: the birds flying above.
- The Quraysh knew the story of Abraha, he came with elephants to destroy the Kabah, but Allah SWT destroyed his army using birds, the weakest of creatures.
 - This verse reminds them: *Have you not reflected on the birds above you?*
- صَافَاتٍ: describes birds with their wings spread out, which is how they are seen most of the time.
- وَيَقْبِضْنَ: refers to the momentary folding of their wings when ascending or descending.
- مَا يُمَسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ: nothing keeps them in the air except Ar-Rahman.
 - Their ability to fly is not from their wings alone, but because Allah SWT enabled them.
- A mufassir noted: Just as Allah SWT made the earth subservient for humans, He made the sky subservient for birds.
- The name الرحمان: is repeated throughout the surah to remind the Quraysh that Allah SWT's mercy is still open, even while He rebukes them.
- إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ: Allah SWT sees every single thing, including their denial and the signs around them.

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنِ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ
Who is it that could be an army for you, to help you besides the Most Merciful? The disbelievers are only in delusion (20)

- أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ: Allah SWT reminds Quraysh and the disbelievers that they are **not a superpower** and no army is undefeatable.
- The idea of a nation or government with an army that “cannot be defeated” **does not exist**, Allah SWT can use **anything** as His army:
 - humans
 - animals
 - insects
 - the sky
 - the earth
- Tafsir mentions the incident in Makkah when Abu Lahab’s son insulted the Prophet ﷺ:
 - The Prophet ﷺ said: “O Allah, send upon him one of Your dogs.”
 - On his journey to Syria, he was attacked and killed by a lion.
- Allah reminds Quraysh: *you have no protector besides Allah.*
 - People may claim to support you in this world,
 - but on the Day of Judgment, *all oppressors will abandon each other.*
- In surah as-Saffat, Allah SWT commands the angels to gather the wrongdoers together, and then asks them:

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنْصُرُونَ

“Why are you not helping one another today?” (Surah as-Saffat 37:25)
- On that day, they will be in complete submission, blaming each other. Where Allah asks: *Who is the army that can help you besides Allah?*
- إِنِ الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ: the disbelievers live in delusion.
 - Allah SWT gives them ability, and they imagine themselves

- invincible.
- The people of Aad said: *“Who is stronger than us?”*
- Allah SWT replied: *“Do they not see that the One who created them is stronger than them?”*
- Allah SWT reminds Quraysh that He gave them **peace and prosperity**:
 - In Surat Quraysh Allah SWT says:

الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِّنْ جُوعٍ وَعَآمَنَهُمْ مِّنْ خَوْفٍ

 - Allah SWT fed them, removed hunger, and granted safety from fear.
 - In the surah before it (Surah Fil), Allah destroyed the people of the elephant.
- The message: **Allah SWT gave Quraysh safety and prosperity, and He can take it away.**

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ بَلْ لَجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ
Who is it that could give you sustenance? If he were to withhold his provision, they have persisted (21)

- When Allah SWT withholds provision, it can appear in many forms:
 - withholding **rain**,
 - causing someone to **lose their job**,
 - or any other means.
- The Prophet ﷺ said that a servant may be **prevented from provision** because of a **sin** they repeatedly fall into.
- If Allah SWT decrees that sustenance is withheld, **no one in the world** can provide it, even if all of humanity gathers to help.
- بَلْ لَجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ describes the disbelievers' state:
 - **عُتُوٍّ** insolence, arrogance, stubborn rebellion
 - **نُفُورٍ** aversion, turning away from the truth
- Since this is how they respond to guidance, Allah SWT follows with a **parable** in the next verses to illustrate their condition.

أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكَبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

Is the one who walks fallen on his face more guided, or the one who walks upright on a straight path? (22)

- Allah SWT compares the believer and the disbeliever through a powerful parable.
- The disbeliever is described as **walking on their face**:
 - Ibn Kathir explains this means they don't know where they're going,
 - they **don't know how to move**,
 - their **face and eyes are fixed on the ground**,
 - symbolizing complete **attachment to the dunya**.
- **مُكَبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ**: also indicates having no purpose, no direction, no higher goal.
- In contrast, the believer walks upright, with their head up
 - not in arrogance,
 - but because they have purpose, direction, mission, and clarity.
- This parable applies to life in this world, but it will also occur **literally** in the Hereafter.
- When the companions heard that disbelievers would be resurrected **walking on their faces**, they were shocked.
- Anas ibn Malik (RA) narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"The One who made them walk on their feet is fully able to make them walk on their faces."
- For disbelievers, being on their faces is **degrading and undignified**, reflecting how they lived, dragged by the dunya.
- For believers, the only time the face touches the ground is in sujud, the most noble and closest position to Allah.

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

Say: He is the One who created you, and gave you hearing, sight, and hearts; yet only a few are grateful (23)

- After addressing the disbelievers directly, Allah now speaks to the Prophet ﷺ a sign of Allah's **displeasure** with the disbelievers.
- **أَنْشَأَكُمْ** means not only "created you", but also **produced, developed, and nurtured** you through every stage:
 - fluid – clot – piece of flesh – bones — flesh over bones – infancy – maturity – and strength.
- **وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ**: the order is deliberate:
 1. **السَّمْعَ Hearing**: the greatest signs of Allah SWT are *heard*, such as Quran recitation that moves the heart.
 2. **الْأَبْصَرَ Seeing**: visual signs of Allah SWT in creation.
 3. **الْأَفْئِدَةَ Hearts**: both hearing and seeing flow into the heart; they are the pathways to spiritual understanding.
- Imam Malik told the young Imam al-Shafai': "*I see Allah has placed light in your heart, do not extinguish it with the darkness of sins.*"
- A mufassir noted the linguistic precision:
 - **السَّمْعَ** (hearing) is **singular**: everyone hears the same sound.
 - **الْأَبْصَارَ** (sights) is **plural**: people see different things.
 - **الْأَفْئِدَةَ** (hearts) is **plural**: people comprehend and internalize differently.
- **قَلِيلًا مَا تَشْكُرُونَ**: only a **very small number** of people show true gratitude for these blessings.

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُخْشَرُونَ

Say: He is the One who multiplied you throughout the earth, and to Him you will be gathered (24)

- **ذَرَأَ**: means to create, spread, and multiply far and wide.
 - From this root comes **ذُرِّيَّةٌ** (progeny), because human beings multiply and spread across the earth.
- This verse and the previous one: **قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ & قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ** together describe the **lifespan and stages** of the human being:
 - creation, development, senses, life on earth, and finally

- **gathering before Allah SWT.**
- **وَالْيَهُ تَحْشَرُونَ**: ultimately, all people will be gathered before Allah SWT.
- At this point, Quraysh should have accepted the truth: the argument is complete, the message is clear.
- But Allah SWT says they continue in **بَل لَّجُوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ**:
 - **عُتُوٍّ**: arrogance, stubborn rebellion
 - **نُفُورٍ**: aversion, turning away

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

They say: When is this promise, if you are truthful? (25)

- Allah SWT uses **وَيَقُولُونَ** to describe the disbelievers, from this point onward, all they say is: *“When? When? When?”*
 - This is the same mockery used by previous nations toward their prophets.
- In surah Sad, they said:

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَنَا قِطْنَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ

“Our Lord, hasten for us our share of punishment before the Day of Account.” (Surah Sad 38:16)

- Allah SWT in surah al-Anfal said:

وَإِذْ قَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا حِجَارَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

And remember when they prayed, “O Allah! If this is indeed the truth from You, then rain down stones upon us from the sky or overcome us with a painful punishment.” (8:32)

قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

Say: That certainly the knowledge is only with Allah and I am only a clear warner (26)

- Allah SWT commands the Prophet ﷺ to respond with:
 - **قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ**: the knowledge of *when* punishment will come belongs **exclusively** to Allah SWT.

- **وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ**: the Prophet ﷺ is only a **clear warner**, sent to deliver the message.
- **إِنَّمَا** carries the meaning of **certainty and exclusivity**: only Allah SWT knows the timing.
- What is certain is this: If people **do not change their ways**, then **Allah SWT's punishment will come**, but its timing is known only to Him.

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سَيِّئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدْعُونَ
 When they it approaching, those who disbelieved you will see their faces distressed full of agony, and it will be said: This is what you were calling for (27)

- **فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ**: Allah SWT uses this wording to show **certainty**: this *will* happen.
- **زُلْفَةً**: means *near, approaching, drawing closer*, they will see the punishment coming step by step.
- At the time of death, the **angle of death** will come to them with the news of Allah SWT's **anger, displeasure, and wrath**.
 - The Prophet ﷺ said:
"Whoever loves meeting Allah, Allah will love meeting him; whoever dislikes meeting Allah, Allah will dislike meeting him."
 - Aisha (RA) asked: *"But who among us does not dislike death?"*
 The Prophet ﷺ explained:
 - The believer receives glad tidings of Allah SWT's pleasure at death, so they begin to **love** meeting Allah SWT, and Allah SWT loves meeting them.
 - The disbeliever receives news of Allah's anger and punishment, so they hate meeting Allah SWT, and Allah SWT hates meeting them.
 - When the disbeliever dies:
 - The angles of punishment will come with **harsh**,

- **frightening shrouds,**
- They are taken to the grave, questioned, and then resurrected.
- Each stage brings them **closer and closer** to Hellfire, this is the **زُلْفَةَ** “*approaching*” they will witness.
- **سَيِّتٌ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا**: their faces will be filled with regret, remorse, depression, sadness, and agony.
 - The face reflects the emotions of the heart, so their inner despair becomes **visible**.
- **هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدْعُونَ**: this is what you used to call for, which they mocked, ridiculed, and demanded.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِیَ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِیَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَنْ یُجِیْرُ الْکَافِرِیْنَ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِیْمٍ
Say: Have you considered that if Allah were to cause my death and along with the believers who follow me, or He were to bestow His mercy upon me, then who will protect the disbelievers from a painful punishment?

(28)

- Quraysh were trying to kill the Prophet ﷺ, or at the very least hoping he would die. However, Allah SWT instructs the Prophet ﷺ to tell them:
 - If Allah causes **me** and those with me to die,
 - or Allah grants **me** mercy and prolongs my life,
 - **who will protect the disbelievers from a painful punishment?**
 - Whether the Prophet ﷺ is alive or dead, this changes nothing and no one can shield the disbelievers from Allah SWT’s punishment.
- **إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِیَ اللَّهُ**: if Allah were to destroy me & **أَوْ رَحِمَنَا**: or if He were to bestow His mercy upon me.
- Mercy means **granting a longer life**, not simply sparing death.
- Allah SWT does not say “أحیانی” (give me life), but uses “رَحِمَنَا” to show that **every moment of life is a mercy**.

- Lesson for us: every breath we take is a mercy from Allah SWT. But it is only truly a mercy if that life is lived in **obedience** to Him.

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ
 Say: He is the Most Merciful, we believe in Him, and upon Him we rely.
 Soon you will know who is in clear error (29)

- Even while Allah is **rebuking, reprimanding, and threatening** the disbelievers, He continues to mention His name **Ar-Rahman**, reminding the Prophet ﷺ that when preaching, he should emphasize that **Allah SWT doors of mercy remain open**.
- **ءَامَنَّا بِهِ**: we believe in Him. This is a nominal structure sentence, and mufasssirun say it acts as a **refutation** (We believe but you disbelieve.)
 - It also implies belief in Allah SWT, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and divine decree.
- **وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا**: and upon Him we rely. This is an abnormal sentence structure, which gives the meaning of exclusivity (We rely on Allah alone.)
- **فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ**: soon, the truth will become clear. The believers will ultimately be vindicated.
- In surah al-Mutaffifin, Allah SWT says *“Indeed, those who committed crimes used to laugh at the believers.”* But later in the surah: *“Today, the believers will laugh at the disbelievers.”*

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَّعِينٍ
 Say: Have you considered, if your water were to sink into the earth, who could bring you flowing water? (30)

- Water is a source of life. Some leaders of Quraysh arrogantly claimed: *“If the water sinks, we will dig with axes and shovels and bring it back.”*
- As a punishment for their arrogance, Allah **removed the moisture from their eyes**, causing them to become **blind**.

- This may be a **secondary meaning**, but it reflects their attitude of pride and denial.
- The verse exposes the helplessness of human beings and the absolute dependence on Allah SWT for even the most basic necessities.

