

اَلْمُلْكِ Al-Mulk

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

The Surah takes its name *al-Mulk* from the very first sentence.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition when this Surah was revealed, but the subject matter and the style indicate that it is one of the earliest Surahs to be revealed at Makkah.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this surah, on the one hand, the teachings of Islam have been introduced briefly, and, on the other, the people living in heedlessness have been aroused from their slumber in a most effective way. A characteristic of the earliest Surahs of the Makkan period is that they present the entire teachings of Islam and the object of the Holy Prophet's mission, not in detail, but briefly, so that they are assimilated by the people easily. Moreover, they are particularly directed to make the people shun heedlessness, to make them think, and to arouse their dormant conscience.

In the first five verses man has been made to realize that

the universe in which he lives is a most well organized and fortified kingdom in which he cannot detect any fault, any weakness or flaw, however hard he may try to probe. This kingdom has been brought from nothing into existence by Allah Almighty Himself and all the powers of controlling, administering and ruling it are also entirely in Allah's hand and His power is infinite. Besides, man has also been told that in this wise system he has not been created without a purpose, but he has been sent here for a test and in this test he can succeed only by his righteous deeds and conduct.

In verses 6-11, dreadful consequences of disbelief which will appear in the Hereafter have been mentioned, and the people have been told that Allah, by sending His Prophets, has warned them of these consequences in this very world, as if to say: Now, if you do not believe in what the Prophets say and correct your attitude and behavior accordingly, in the Hereafter you will yourself have to admit that you really deserved the punishment that was being meted out to you.

In verses 12-14, the truth that has been impressed on the minds is that the Creator cannot be unaware of His creation, as if to say: He is aware of each open and hidden secret of yours, even of the innermost ideas of your hearts. Hence, the right basis of morality is that man should avoid evil, fearing the accountability of the unseen God, whether in the world there is a power to take him to task for this or not, and whether in the world there is a possibility of being harmed by such a power or not. Those who adopt such a conduct in the world alone will deserve forgiveness and a

rich reward in the Hereafter.

In verses 15-23, making allusions, one after the other to those common truths of daily occurrence, which man does not regard as worthy of much attention, he has been invited to consider them seriously. It has been said: Look: the earth on which you move about with full satisfaction and peace of mind, and from which you obtain your sustenance has been subdued for you by Allah; otherwise this earth might at any time start shaking suddenly so as to cause your destruction, or a typhoon might occur, which may annihilate you completely. Look at the birds that fly above you; it is only Allah Who is sustaining them in the air. Look at your own means and resources, if Allah wills to inflict you with a scourge, none can save you from it. And if Allah wills to close the doors of sustenance on you, none can open them for you. These things are there to make you aware of the truth, but you see them like animals, which are unable to draw conclusions from observations, and you do not use your sight, hearing and minds which Allah has bestowed on you as men. That is why you do not see the right way.

In verses 24-27, it has been said: You have to ultimately appear before your God in any case. It is not for the Prophet to tell you the exact time and date of the event. His only duty is to warn you beforehand of its inevitable occurrence. Today you do not listen to him and demand that he should cause the event to occur and appear prematurely before you; but when it does occur, and you see it with your own eyes, you will then be astounded. Then, it will be said to you: This is the very thing you were calling

to be hastened.

In verses 28-29, replies have been given to what the disbelievers of Makkah said against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions. They cursed the Prophet (peace be upon him) and prayed for his and the believers' destruction. To this it has been said: Whether those who call you to the right way are destroyed or shown mercy by Allah, how will their fate change your destiny? You should look after yourselves and consider who would save you if you were overtaken by the scourge of God. You regard those who believe in God and put their trust in Him as the misguided. A time will come when it will become evident as to who was misguided.

In conclusion, the people have been asked this question and left to ponder over it: If the water which has come out from the earth at some place in the desert or hill country of Arabia and upon which depends your whole life activity, should sink and vanish underground, who beside Allah can restore to you this life giving water.

1. Blessed^{*1} is He in Whose hand is the dominion,^{*2} and He has power over everything.^{*3}

تَبْرَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

*1 *Tabaraka* is a superlative from *barkat*. *Barkat* comprehends the meanings of exaltation and greatness, abundance and plentiful, permanence and multiplicity of virtues and excellences. When the superlative *tabaraka* is formed from it, it gives the meaning that Allah is infinitely noble and great. He is superior to everything beside

Himself in His essence and attributes and works. His beneficence is infinite, and His excellences are permanent and everlasting. (For further explanation, see E.N. 43 of Surah Al-Aaraf; E.N. 1-4 of Surah Al-Muminoon; E.Ns 1 and 19 of Surah Al-Furqan).

*2 As the word *al-Mulk* has been used, it cannot be taken in any limited meaning. Inevitably, it would imply sovereignty over everything that exists in the universe. In Whose hand is the dominion does not mean that He has physical hands, but that He is possessor of all power and authority and no one else has any share in it.

*3 That is, He can do whatever He wills, nothing can frustrate or hinder Him from doing what He pleases.

2. Who created death and life that He may test you which of you is best in deed,^{*4} and He is All Mighty, All Forgiving.^{*5}

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ
لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

*4 That is, the object of giving life to man in the world and causing his death is to test him to see which of them is best in deeds. Allusion has been made in this brief sentence to a number of truths:

(1) That life and death are given by Allah, no one else can grant life nor cause death.

(2) That neither the life nor the death of a creation like man, which has been given the power to do both good and evil, is purposeless. The Creator has created him in the world for the test. Life is for him the period of the test and

death means that the time allotted for the test has come to an end.

(3) That for the sake of this very test the Creator has given every man an opportunity for action, so that he may do good or evil in the world and practically show what kind of a man he is.

(4) That the Creator alone will decide who has done good or evil. It is not for us to propose a criterion for the good and the evil deeds but for Almighty Allah. Therefore, whoever desires to get through the test, will have to find out what is the criterion of a good deed in His sight. Every person will be recompensed according to his deeds, for if there was no reward or punishment the test would be meaningless.

*5 This has two meanings and both are implied here:

(1) That He is Almighty, in spite of being dominant over all His creatures, He is Merciful and Forgiving for them, not tyrannous and cruel.

(2) That He has full power to punish the evildoers. No one can escape His punishment. But He is forgiving for him who feels penitent, refrains from evil and asks for His forgiveness.

3. Who created seven heavens one above the other.*⁶ You will not see any fault in the creation of the Beneficent.*⁷ Then turn up your eyes, do you see any flaw.*⁸

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا
مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن
تَفَوُّتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَى
مِن فُطُورٍ



*6 For explanation, see E.N. 34 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 2 of Surah Ar-Raad; E.N. 8 of Surah Al-Hijr; E.N. 113 of Surah Al-Hajj; E.N. 15 of Surah Al-Muminoon; E.N. 5 of Surah As-Saaffat; E.N. 90 of Surah Al-Mumin.

*7 Literally, *tafawut* is disproportion: two things being out of accord and in disagreement with each other. So, the divine words mean: You will not see any indiscipline, any disorder and discordance anywhere in the universe, there is nothing disjointed and out of proportion in this world created by Allah: all its parts are well connected and in perfect harmony and coordination.

*8 The word *futoor* means a crack, rift, fissure, or a thing's being split and broken. The verse means to say that the whole universe is so closely well-knit and everything in it, from a particle on the earth to the huge galaxies, so well connected and coherent that the continuity of the system of the universe seems to break nowhere, however hard one may try to probe and investigate. (For further explanation, see E.N. 8 of Surah Qaf).

4. Then look again and yet again, (your) sight will return to you humbled, and worn out.

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ
إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ



5. And indeed, We have adorned the world's heaven*⁹ with lamps (stars),*¹⁰ and We have made them a means

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا
بِمَصْبِيحٍ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا

of driving away devils.*¹¹ And We have prepared for them the punishment of the blazing Fire.

لِّلشَّيْطِينِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ
السَّعِيرِ

*9 The world's heaven: the heaven the stars and planets of which can be seen with the naked eye; the objects beyond that which can be seen only through telescopes are the distant heaven; and the heavens still farther away are those which have not yet been seen even with telescopes.

*10 The word *masabih* in the original has been used as a common noun, and therefore, automatically gives the meaning of the lamp's being splendid and glorious. It means: We have not created this universe dark, dismal and desolate, but have beautified and decorated it with stars, the glory and grandeur of which at night strike man with amazement.

*11 This does not mean that the stars themselves are pelted at the Satans, nor that the meteorites shoot out only to drive away the Satans, but it means that the countless meteorites which originate from the stars and wander in space at tremendous speeds and which also fall to the earth in a continuous shower prevent the Satans of the earth from ascending to the heavens. Even if they try to ascend heavenward these meteorites drive them away. This thing has been mentioned here because the Arabs believed about the soothsayers, and this also was the claim made by the soothsayers themselves, that the Satans were under their control, or that they had a close contact with them, and through them they received news of the unseen, and thus,

could foretell the destinies of the people. That is why at several places in the Quran, it has been stated that there is absolutely no possibility for the Satans ascending to the heavens and bringing news of the unseen. (For explanation, see E.Ns 9-12 of Surah Al-Hijr, E.Ns 6, 7 of Surah As-Saaffat).

As for the truth about meteorites, man's information in this regard is still without a scientific basis. However, the theory which seems best to account for all the facts known today and the information gathered from the examination of the meteorites fallen on the earth, is that meteorites originate from the disintegration of one or more planets and wander in space and sometimes fall to the earth under its gravitational pull. (See Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. XV, under Meteorites).

6. And for those who disbelieve in their Lord^{*12} is the punishment of Hell, and an evil abode.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

*12 That is, the fate of all those, whether men or Satans, who disbelieve in their Lord. (For the explanation of the meaning of disbelieving in the Lord (*Rabb*), see E.N 161 of Surah Al-Baqarah; E.N. 178 of Surah An-Nisa; E.N. 39 of Surah Al-Kahf; E.N. 3 of Surah Al-Momin.

7. When they are cast into it, they will hear its roaring,^{*13} and it will be boiling up.

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهيقًا وَهِيَ تَفورُ

*13 The word *shahiq* is used for producing a cry like the

donkey's braying. The sentence may also mean that it could be the sound of Hell itself, as well as that it would be the sound coming from Hell, where the people already flung into it would be screaming and crying. This second meaning is supported by Surah Houd, Ayat 106, where it has been said: Therein they will pant and hiss (because of thirst), and the first meaning is confirmed by Surah Al-Furqan, Ayat 12, which says: When the Hell will see them from afar, they will hear the sounds of its raging and roaring. On this basis, the correct meaning is that it would be the noise made both by Hell and by the dwellers of Hell.

8. It almost bursts with rage. Every time a group is cast into it, its keepers will ask them: "Did there not come to you a warner."^{*14}

تَكَادُ تَمَيِّزُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ ط كَلَّمَا أَلْقَى
فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ
نَذِيرٌ



*14 The real nature of this question will not be of a question that the keepers of Hell would like to ask them whether a warner from Allah had come to them or not, but the object would be to make them realize that no injustice had been done to them by casting them into Hell. They would try to make them confess that Allah had not kept them uninformed and unwarned. He had sent the Prophets to them. He had informed them of the truth and of the right way. He had warned them that if they followed a way other than the right way, it would lead them to Hell, in which they had been cast. But they had not listened to the Prophets. Hence, they rightly deserved the punishment

which was being meted out to them at that time. This thing has been pointed out over and over again in the Quran that the test for which Allah has sent man in the world is not being conducted by keeping man absolutely unaware and uninformed of the requirements of the test only to see whether he found the right way by himself or not; but Allah has made the most appropriate arrangements that could possibly be made of guiding him to the right way, and it is that He has raised the Prophets and sent down the Books. Now the test of man lies in this whether he accepts the Prophets and the Books brought by them and adopts the straight way, or turns away from them to follow his own desires, wishes and speculations. Thus, the Prophethood, in fact, is Allah's argument which He has established against man and his entire future life depends on its acceptance or rejection. No one, after the appointment of the Prophets, can present the excuse that he remained unaware of the truth, or that he has been caught and put to the hard test unawares, or that he is being punished while he was innocent. This theme has been presented in many different ways in the Quran; for instance, see Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 213, and E.N. 230; Surah An-Nisa, Ayats 41-42, 165 and E.Ns 64 and 208; Surah Al-Anaam, Ayats 130-131 and E.Ns 98-100; Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 15 and E.N. 17; Surah Ta Ha, Ayat 134; Surah Al-Qasas, Ayats 47, 59, 65 and E.Ns 66, 83; Surah Fatir, Ayat 37; Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 50 and E.N. 66.

9. They will say: "Yes indeed, a warner did come

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا

to us, but we denied and said, Allah has not sent down anything. You are not but in great error.”*15

وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ ﴿١٥﴾

*15 That is, not only you but the people who have believed in and followed you also are misguided and lost in grave error.

10. And they will say: “If we had listened or understood,*16 we would not be among the dwellers of the blazing Fire.”

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٦﴾

*16 If we had listened or understood: If we had listened to the Prophets with attention as seekers after truth or used our intellect to understand what actually was the message they were presenting before us. Here listening has been given priority over understanding, the reason being that the pre-requisite of obtaining guidance is to listen to what the Prophet teaches, or to read if it is in the written form, like a seeker after truth. To ponder over it in an attempt to understand the truth is secondary. Without the Prophet’s guidance man cannot by himself reach the truth directly by using his intellect and common sense.

11. Then will they confess of their sin.*17 So, far removal (the mercy) for the dwellers of Hell.

فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٧﴾

*17 The word *dhanb* (sin) has been used in the singular. It means that the real sin because of which they became

worthy of Hell was to belie the Messengers and refuse to obey them. All other sins are its consequences.

12. Indeed, those who fear their Lord unseen,^{*18} for them is forgiveness and a great reward.^{*19}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ
لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

***18** This is the real basis of morality in religion. A person's refraining from an evil because it is an evil in his personal opinion, or because the world regards it as an evil, or because its commission is likely to bring loss in the world, or because it may entail a punishment by a worldly power, is a very flimsy basis for morality. A man's personal opinion may be wrong, he may regard a good thing as bad and a bad thing as good because of some philosophy of his own. In the first place, the worldly standards of good and evil have never been the same, they have been changing from time to time. No universal and eternal standard in the moral philosophies is found today, nor has it ever been found before. The fear of worldly loss also does not provide a firm foundation for morality. The person who avoids an evil because he fears the loss that may result from it for himself cannot keep himself from committing it when there is no fear of incurring such a loss. Likewise, the danger of the punishment by a worldly power also is not something which can turn a person into a gentleman. Everybody knows that no worldly power is knower of both the seen and the unseen. Many crimes can be committed unseen and unobserved. Then, there are many possible devices by which one can escape the punishment of every worldly

power; and the laws made by a worldly power also do not cover all evils. Most evils are such as they do not come within the purview of the mundane laws, whereas they are even worse than the evils which they regard as punishable. That is why, the religion of truth has raised the edifice of morality on the basis that one should refrain from an evil in fear of the unseen God Who sees man under all conditions, from Whose grasp man cannot escape in any way, Who has given man an all-pervading, universal and everlasting criterion of good and evil. To forsake evil and adopt good only out of fear of Him is the real good which is commendable in religion. Apart from this, if a man refrains from committing evil for any other reason or adopts acts which in view of their external form are regarded as good acts, his these moral acts will not be worth any merit and value in the Hereafter, for they are like a building which has been built on sand.

***19** That is, there are two inevitable results of fearing God unseen.

(1) That whatever errors and sins one will have committed because of human weaknesses, will be forgiven provided these were not committed because of fearlessness of God.

(2) That whatever good acts a man performs on the basis of this belief, he will be rewarded richly for them.

13. And conceal your talk, or proclaim it. He certainly is Knower of what is in the breasts. ^{*20}

وَأَسِرُّوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوْ أَجْهَرُوا بِهِ
إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

***20** The address is to all human beings, whether they are

believers or unbelievers. For the believer, it contains the admonition that while living his life in the world he should always remember that not only his open and hidden deeds but even his secret intentions and innermost thoughts are not hidden from Allah. And for the unbeliever, the warning that he may do whatever he may please fearless of God, but nothing that he does can remain un-noticed and unseen by Him.

14. Would He not know, who has created.*²¹ And He is the Subtle,*²² the All Aware.

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ

الْخَبِيرُ

*²¹ Another translation can be: Would He not know His own creatures? In the original text *khalaga* has been used, which may mean: Who has created as well as whom He has created, In both cases the meaning remains the same. This is the argument for what has been said in the preceding sentence. That is, how is it possible that the Creator should be unaware of His creation? The creation may remain unaware of itself, but the Creator cannot be unaware of it. He has made every vein of your body, every fiber of your heart and brain. You breathe because He enables you to breathe, your limbs function because He enables them to function, How then can anything of yours remain hidden from Him.

*²² The word *Latif* as used in the original means the One Who works in imperceptible ways as well as the One Who knows the hidden truths and realities.

15. It is He who has made the earth subservient to you, so walk about in the paths thereof, and eat of His provisions.*²³ And to Him is the resurrection.*²⁴

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ
ذُلُولًا فَأَمْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا
مِنْ رِزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

*²³ That is, this earth has not become subdued for you of its own accord, and the provisions also that you are eating have not become available here by themselves, but Allah has so arranged it by His wisdom and power that your life became possible here and this splendid globe became so peaceful that you are moving about on it with full peace of mind, and it has become such a vast table spread with food that it contains endless and limitless provisions for your sustenance. If you are not lost in heedlessness and look about yourself intelligently, you will find how much wisdom underlies in the making of this earth habitable for you and arranging in it immeasurable stores of provisions for you. (For explanation, see E.Ns 73, 74, 81 of Surah An-Naml; E.Ns 29, 32 of Surah YaSeen; E.Ns 90, 91 of Al-Momin, E.N. 7 of Surah Az-Zukhruf, E.N. 7 of Surah Al-Jathiyah, E.N. 18 of Surah Qaf).

*²⁴ That is, while you move about on the earth and eat of what Allah has provided for you here, you should not forget that ultimately you have to appear before God one day.

16. Have you taken security from Him Who is in the heaven*²⁵ that He will not

ءَأَمِنْتُمْ مِّنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ تَخْسِفَ

cause the earth to swallow you when it shakes (as in an earthquake).

بِكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ



***25** This does not mean that Allah lives in the heavens, but it has been so said because man naturally looks up to the heaven whenever he wants to turn to Allah, raises his hands heavenward in prayer and implores Allah turning his eyes up to heaven whenever he finds himself helpless in an affliction. Then whenever a calamity befalls him suddenly, he says it has descended from heaven; whenever something unusual happens, he says it has come from heaven; and he calls the Books revealed by Allah as heavenly Books. Accordingly to a tradition in Abu Daud, a person came before the Prophet (peace be upon him) with a black slave-girl and said: It has become obligatory on me to set a slave free; can I set this slave-girl free? Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the slave-girl: Where is Allah? She pointed heavenward with her finger. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: Who am I? She first pointed towards him and then towards the heaven, by which she obviously meant to say: You have come from Allah. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Set her free; she is a believer. (A story closely resembling this has been narrated in Muwatta, Muslim and Nasai also). About Khawla bint Thaibah, Umar once said to the people: She is the lady whose complaint was heard above the seven heavens. (In E.N. 2 of Surah al-Mujadalah, we have given full details concerning this). All this clearly shows that it is natural with man that

whenever he thinks of God, his mind turns to the heaven above and not to the earth below. In view of this very thing the words *man fis-samaa* (He Who is in the heaven) have been used about Allah. There is no room here for any doubt that the Quran regards Allah Almighty as living in the heaven. In fact, there cannot be any basis for this doubt, for in the very beginning of this Surah Al-Mulk, it has been stated: He Who created seven heavens, one above the other, and in Surah Al-Baqarah it has been said: You will face Allah in whatever direction you turn your face. (verse 115).

17. Or have you taken security from Him Who is in the heaven that He will not send upon you a hurricane.*26 Then you shall know how was My warning.*27

أَمْ أَمِنْتُمْ مِّنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ۗ فَسَتَعْمُونَ كَيْفَ
نَذِيرٍ



*26 The object is to impress this: Your very survival and well-being on the earth are at all times dependent upon Allah Almighty's grace and bounty: you are not strutting about on this earth at will by your own power: you are under obligation only to Allah's protection for each moment of your life that you are passing here, otherwise Allah at any moment may cause such an earthquake to occur as may make this very earth to become your grave instead of the cradle that it is, or may cause a windstorm to blow razing all your towns and settlements to the ground.

*27 My warning: the warning that was being given through the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Quran to the disbelievers of Makkah to the effect: If you do not refrain

from your disbelief and polytheism and do not accept the message of Tauhid being given to you, you will be overtaken by the scourge of God.

18. And indeed, those before them denied, then how (terrible) was My reproach.*28

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ
فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ

*28 The allusion is to the communities who had belied the Messengers, who had come to them previously and consequently been afflicted with divine punishment.

19. Do they not see at the birds above them, spreading their wings, and closing them in. None is upholding them but the Beneficent.*29 Indeed, He is Seer over all things.*30

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ
صَفَّتْ وَيَقْبِضْنَ مَا يُمَسِّكُهُنَّ
إِلَّا الرَّحْمَنُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ بَصِيرٌ

*29 That is, each bird that flies in the air, does so in the protection of the All-Merciful God. He it is Who has given to each bird the form and structure by which it became able to fly. He it is Who has taught each bird the method to fly. He it is Who has made the air obey the laws by which it became possible for the heavier than air bodies to fly in it, and He it is Who upholds every bird in the air, otherwise the moment Allah withdraws His protection from it, it drops to the ground.

*30 That is, this is not confined only to birds, but whatever exists in the world, exists because of Allah's keeping and

guardianship. He alone provides the means necessary for the existence of everything, and He alone keeps watch that everything created by Him is provided with the necessities of life.

20. Or who is it that could be an army for you to help you other than the Beneficent.*31 The disbelievers are not but in delusion.

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ
يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ۚ إِنَّ
الْكَافِرُونَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

*31 Another translation can be: Who is there beside the Merciful, who comes to your rescue as your army? The translation that we have adopted in the text above has relevance to the following sentence, and this second to the preceding discourse.

21. Or who is it that could provide for you if He should withhold His provision. But, they persist in rebellion and aversion.

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ
أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ ۚ بَلْ لَّجُورٌ فِي
عُتُوِّ
وَنُفُورٍ ﴿٢١﴾

22. Then is he who is walking fallen on his face*32 better guided, or he who is walking upright on a straight path.

أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكَبِّاً عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِ
أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ
صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

*32 Walking fallen on his face: walking with face turned down like the cattle on the same track on which someone

put him.

23. Say: “It is He who has created you, and made for you hearing, and sight, and hearts. Little thanks is that you give.”*33

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

***33** That is, Allah had made you men, not cattle. You were not meant to follow blindly whatever error and deviation you found prevailing in the world, without considering for a moment whether the way you had adopted was right or wrong. You have not been given these ears that you may refuse to listen to the one who tries to distinguish the right from the wrong for you, and may persist in whatever false notions you already had in your mind. You have not been given these eyes that you may follow others like the blind and may not bother to see whether the signs scattered around you in the world testified to the unity of God, which the Messenger (peace be upon him) of God is preaching, or whether the system of the universe is Godless, or is being run by many gods simultaneously. Likewise, you have also not been given this knowledge and intelligence that you may give up thinking and understanding to others and may adopt every crooked way that was enforced by somebody in the world, and may not use your own intellect to see whether it was right or wrong. Allah has blessed you with knowledge and intelligence, sight and hearing, so that you may recognize the truth, but you are being ungrateful to Him in that you are employing these faculties for every

other object than the one for which these had been granted. (For further explanation, see E.Ns 72, 73 of Surah An-Naml; E.Ns 75, 76 of Surah Al-Mominoon; E.Ns 17, 18 of Surah As-Sajdah; E.N. 31 of Surah Al-Ahqaf).

24. Say: "It is He who has dispersed you in the earth, and to Him you shall be gathered."*34

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

*34 That is, after being resurrected from death, you will be gathered together from every corner of the earth and presented before Allah.

25. And they say: "When will this promise be (fulfilled) if you are truthful."*35

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

*35 They did not ask this question in order to know the time and date of Resurrection so that if they were told the year, the month, the day and time of its occurrence, they would accept it. But, in fact, they thought that Resurrection was impossible, and its occurrence remote from reason, and they asked this question in order to have an excuse for denying it. They meant to say: When will this strange story of Resurrection and gathering together, that you are telling us, materialize? What for has it been put off? Why don't you make it appear forthwith so that we are assured of it? In this connection, one should understand that one can be certain of Resurrection only by rational arguments, and these have been elaborated at many places in the Quran. As for the date of its occurrence only an ignorant person could

raise such a question about it, for even if it is told, it does not make any difference. The unbeliever would say: Well, when it does occur on the date you tell, I shall then believe in it; how can I believe today that it will actually occur on that very day? (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 of Surah Luqman; E.N. 116 of Surah Al-Ahzab; E.Ns 5, 48 of Surah Saba E.N. 45 of YaSeen).

26. Say: "The knowledge is only with Allah, and I am only a clear warner."^{*36}

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَلْعَلُّمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ



*36 That is, this I know that it will certainly come, and knowing this much only is enough for warning the people before its actual occurrence. As for the question when it will actually come, the knowledge of it is with Allah, not with me, and there is no need of this knowledge for administering the warning. This can be better understood by an example. As to the exact time when a person will die, it is only known to Allah; however, all know that everyone has to die one day. Our this knowledge is enough that we may warn a heedless friend of ours that he should look after himself and his interests before death. For this warning it is not necessary to know the exact day on which he will die.

27. Then, when they will see it approaching, the faces of those who disbelieve, shall be distressed,^{*37} and it will be said: "This is that which

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي

you used to call.”

كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدْعُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

***37** That is, they will be in the same agony as is suffered by the criminal who is being taken to the gallows.

28. Say: “Have you ever considered, if Allah should destroy me and those with me, or should bestow mercy upon us, who then will save the disbelievers from the painful punishment.”^{*38}

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِي اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَنْ يُجِيرُ الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

***38** When the Prophet (peace be upon him) started his mission in Makkah and the members of the different clans of Quraish began to embrace Islam, the people of every house started cursing him and his companions. They started practicing magic and charms on him to cause his death, even devising plots to kill him. At this, it was said: Say to them: what will it profit you whether we perish or we live by the grace of God? You should worry for yourselves as to how you will save yourselves from the punishment of Allah?

29. Say: “He is the Beneficent, we have believed in Him, and upon Him have we put our trust.”^{*39} So you will come to know who is it in clear error.”

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا فَسْتَعْمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٩﴾

***39** That is, we have believed in God, and you are denying Him; we have put our trust in Him, and you have put your

trust in yourself, your own resources and false deities besides Allah; therefore, only we deserve to be shown mercy by Allah, not you.

30. Say: “Have you considered if the water (of) your (wells) should sink down (into the earth), then who would bring you the flowing (spring) water.”*40

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا
فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَّعِينٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

*40 That is, does anyone else another beside Allah have the power to restore these springs of water to you? If none else has this power, and you know well that none has it, then who is worthy of worship: God or your false deities, who do not have the power to restore them? Then ask your own selves as to who is misled and misguided, those who believe in One God or those who believe in many gods.

