

Lessons From Surah Al-Mulk and Al-Waqi'ah

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Surah Al-Mulk & Surah Al-Waqiah

Prologue: The Fadha'il of Surah Al-Mulk and Surah Al-Waqi'ah

In this section, we will be looking at Surah Al-Mulk (67th Surah, 30 verses) and Surah Al-Waqi'ah (56th surah, 96 verses). To begin this section, let us look at the benefits of reciting surah Al-Mulk, as described in hadiths narrated by Abu Hurayrah and Ibn Mas'ud, which is as follows: -

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

*“A surah from the Qur'aan containing thirty verses will intercede for a man so that he will be forgiven. It is the surah Tabaarak Alathi bi yadihi'l-mulk [i.e., Surah al-Mulk].”
Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 2891; Abu Dawood, 1400; Ibn Maajah, 3786.*

While the hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah informs us that by reciting the surah, we will get Allah SWT's forgiveness, another hadith by Ibn Mas'ud below informs us that we will be safe from the torments of the grave. The hadith is as follows: -

It was narrated that 'Abd-Allah ibn Mas'ood said:

“Whoever reads Tabaarak Allahi bi yadihi'l-mulk [i.e., Surah al-Mulk] every night, Allah will protect him from the torment of the grave. At the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) we used to call it al-maani'ah (that which protects). In the Book of Allah, it is a surah which, whoever recites it every night has done very well.” Narrated by al-Nasaa'i, 6/179; classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Targheeb wa'l-Tarheeb, 1475.

May Allah SWT give us the strength so that we can not only recite Surah Al-Mulk, but as we shall proceed in the next session, we also ask Allah SWT's guide so that we can understand the specific meanings and lessons of Surah Al-Mulk itself. While Surah Al-Mulk tells us of what happens once we have died, Surah Al-Waqi'ah on the other hand tells us of the benefits we can derive in this world. Let us look at a short hadith below, narrated under the authority of Ibn al-Sunni:

Our Prophet (SAW), said in a hadith, *“Whoever recites Surah Waqiah at night will never encounter poverty”* (Ibn Sunni 620).

As mentioned in one source, Imam Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Mohammad, better known as Ibn Sunni (RA) was arguably the main student of Imam al-Nasai. He is to Imam al-Nasai as Imam Yahya al-Laythi was to Imam Malik (RA) because even though there were many students that took the texts from Imam al-Nasai, the riwayat of Ibn Sunni (RA) is the most

famous and widespread. The only difference between them though is that Ibn Sunni (RA) heard the whole collection, but Imam Laythi missed a portion from Kitab al-Itikaaf. (<https://www.tapataalk.com/groups/cordobaacademy/was-ibn-sunni-a-student-of-imam-al-nasai-bio-t8087434.html>)

Besides the collection from Ibn Sunni, Ibn Asakir also narrated a hadith concerning Surah Al-Waqi'ah which is as follows: -

Another hadith from our Prophet (SAW) says, “*Surah Waqi’ah is the Surah of Wealth, so recite it and teach it to your children*” (Ibn Asakir).

As told from a different source, Ibn Asakir (1106–1175) was a Sunni Islamic scholar, a historian, and a disciple of the Sufi mystic Abu al-Najib Suhrawardi. Born in Damascus, during the reign of Atabeg Toghtekin, Ibn Asakir received an extensive education, as befitting someone from a wealthy family. By 1120, he was attending lectures of al-Sulami at the Shafi'i madrasa, which was built by Atabeg Gümüshtigin (Wikipedia). Having known two hadiths concerning Surah Al-Mulk and another concerning Surah Al-Waqi'ah, we ask for Allah SWT's guidance and blessings so that we can recite these surahs frequently. InshaAllah, in our next journey, we shall discover more about Surah Al-Mulk and Al-Waqi'ah.

May our efforts be blessed with *barakah*. Aameen. With that, we end today's session.

a. Surah Al-Mulk and Allah SWT's Creations (Verses 1-4)

We thank Allah SWT for giving us strength to continue with this series on Surah Al-Mulk. This surah (Surah Al-Mulk) should be read and understood, at very minimum, under 3 contexts. First, it is considered as a late Makkiyah surah, implying that it carries a strong message against the disbelievers. Second, it has many levels of meanings, as easy as understanding it by looking at its direct translation to understanding the philosophical inferences behind the surah. Third, it covers the whole sphere of creation; those in the heaven and those in this world. Wallahua'lam.

InshaAllah, in today's session, we ask for Allah's guide so that we can try to contextualise the surah as deep as we can and Inshaallah fully appreciate its message. We will discuss only verses 1-4 and this session will be divided into the overall meaning of "*tabarak*" (the first word in the surah), followed by a discussion on the creation of death and life, and lastly the phenomenon of the 7 heavens.

For the record, Surah Al-Mulk can be divided into 6 sections, in which the longest section will be section 2, while the shortest will be section 5. Let us now start by looking at the first verse, which is as follows:

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

1. *Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion, and He is over all things competent.*

The first verse of Surah Al-Mulk informs us on Allah SWT's power and His competence, as well as His rahmah and also His majesty. In fact, as we will discuss later, in this surah, Allah SWT mentioned Ar-Rahman many times, despite the content of the Surah informing us about the punishments of Hellfire for those who are ungrateful and reject the message of truth.

However, Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan tried to give us a deeper meaning of this Surah Al-Mulk, and we will highlight a few words in the first verse, which are "*tabarak*" and "*qadir*". We should remind ourselves that this surah is considered as a late Makkiyah surah, implying that the Musyrikun Quraysh were at the highest peak of their power and arrogance, flaunting their strength, to the point the Prophet SAW had to make the decision to migrate.

The word "Al-Mulk" should inform us that their (disbelievers) power is meaningless in front of Allah's power and majesty. The word "*tabarak*" also carries the meaning *barakah*. Food with *barakah* can be enjoyed by many without complaints, and neither is it insufficient nor is it wastage. Knowledge with *barakah*, even though it is miniscule, the benefit not only reaches far too many people, but lasts for a longer period of time as well. Allah SWT

began by showing to us that whatever cases or situations faced by humans, whether good or bad, Allah SWT's *barakah* is infinitely abundant.

Next, we will talk a little bit on the word "*qadir*", which not only implies competence or power, but as mentioned by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, also carries the meaning that Allah SWT is the One who decides our fate and destiny. This word hints us that we might think that we are somebody in this world, but we should remember that our future, at a level, has already been predestined by Allah SWT.

InshaAllah, we will now move our discussion to the next verse, which is as follows:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

2. [He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best indeed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving.

The common things which people want to know pertaining to verse 2 of Surah Al-Mulk is why Allah mentioned "death" first before "life", as well as why Allah SWT used the word "created" (*halq*) for the context of death and life. Other than that, people also usually want to know why Allah SWT would test us.

Majority ulamas agree that we were first not in the state of living, therefore Allah SWT began the verse by mentioning that He had created death, before life. There are many verses in the Quran which explains such concept.

A simple example is in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 28, which is as follows:

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ۖ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were lifeless and He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned. (Al-Baqarah: 28)

One way to understand how Allah SWT created death is by understanding that when we talk about creation, we should not think only of everything that exists, but also everything which are extinct. When we look at our body, we understand that it is Allah's creation. Say, if we get a heart attack, we should also understand that the heart attack is also one of Allah's creation. Allah SWT is the All-Knowing, and when He tests the mankind, it doesn't mean that He does not know what the outcome would be, whether the person would pass or fail. In general, even teachers know, to a certain extent, which of their students would pass and which would fail. Allah SWT knows immeasurably more than that.

Therefore, as His creation, our role is to make sure that we pass the test. We should also remind ourselves that Allah's blessing is abundantly eternal (*tabarak*). There are many discussions by ulamas on why Allah SWT mentioned death before life, but perhaps this is beyond our scope of discussion.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan explained that we should always keep in mind that to fully understand Surah Al-Mulk, the word "*tabarak*" by right not only applies in the first verse, but also in the next 2 verses, which are verses 2 and 3. We will now move on to discuss the third verse of Surah Al-Mulk.

First things first, let us first have a look at the verse itself, which is as follows:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا^ط مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوتٍ^ط فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ
هَلْ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُورٍ

3. [And] who created seven heavens in layers. You do not see in the creation of the Most Merciful any inconsistency. So, return [your] vision [to the sky]; do you see any breaks?

This passage is very important, and it is also very important for us to understand the words "*tibaqa*" and "*halqi Ar-Rahman*". First of all, let us mention here that when we talk about the 7 heavens, we are not implying the 7 types of paradise. Paradise is *Jannah*. The concept of heaven should be understood as *samawat*.

The term *tibaqa*, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, is a very complex term for the word "layers". The layers here are described as so fused together, that even though we know that there are layers, we will not be able to see it.

There was a great ulama of tafseer of the past, who was also a great linguist, called Ibn Faris (died 395H) whose work was always referred to, especially his explanation on Surah Al-Mulk. We have mentioned how in verse 28 of Surah Al-Baqarah, Allah SWT talks about death first before life, in the next verse of Surah Al-Baqarah (verse 29), Allah SWT straight away discusses about the 7 heavens, implying that there is always a connection between the story of the human creation (death or life) and the story of the "*sab'a samawat*" (7 heavens).

Below is verse 29 of Surah Al-Baqarah:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ
سَمَاوَاتٍ ۗ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth. Then He directed Himself to the heaven, [His being above all creation], and made them seven heavens, and He is Knowing of all things. (Al-Baqarah:29)

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan informed us that the word “*halqi Ar-Rahman*” (creation of the Most Merciful) here not only refers to the 7 heavens, but also including the creation of death and life mentioned in verse 2. Allah SWT wants us to see that in both of these creations, there are no inconsistencies. Simply put, there is no one who began without death, and there is no one who is alive and will not die.

So, to are the consistencies in the sky, such as the movement of the stars, the sun and the moon. Wallahua’lam. InshaAllah, let us move on to the next verse, which is verse 4 of Surah Al-Mulk.

The verse is as follows:

ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنْقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ

4. Then return [your] vision twice again. [Your] vision will return to you humbled while it is fatigued.

In this verse, Allah SWT asks us to relook, or look over and over again at the sky. In the last part of verse 3, Allah SWT asked us to return our gaze to the sky, the word “return” implying that we have gazed to the sky beforehand but did not learn anything significant from it.

We should try, after understanding Surah Al-Mulk, at least verses 1-4, to look at the sky, and InshaAllah, our knowledge and understanding on the creations, especially those which relate to the sky, will be completely different. Plus, when we look over and over, we will begin to realise how small we are, not even in front of Allah, but just in front of His creation (the sky). For those who reject and is a disbeliever, or arrogant towards Allah SWT’s message of truth, they will be humbled by just looking at the sky.

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the word “*hasir*” does not actually mean tired, but it hints that the individual who was arrogant to Allah will feel inferior, just like how an egocentric man will feel when meeting his old friends who actually became more successful than him. In short, that person will begin to admit how terribly low he/she is in front of Allah after seeing the sky over and over again.

InshaAllah, in the next session, we will discuss how Allah SWT brings the discussion on the sky to the discussion about the earth, so that we can understand what Allah expects

us to understand about His *tabarak*, His creation of death and life, as well as the importance of the 7 layers of heaven. Wallahua'lam.

With that, we shall end today's session.

b. Shaytan and the *Kafirun* (Verses 5-11)

We continue our discussion concerning Surah Al-Mulk, the 67th surah, which has 30 verses. Let us remind ourselves that the main audience of this Surah are the disbelievers, however, this message must be kept in our minds as well. We have mentioned in the previous session that in this session, we would look at the events in this world, while the last session discussed the importance of pondering on the creation of the 7 heavens.

We will divide our discussion into 3 parts. The first part will be a discussion on Shaytan. The second will discuss on the disbelievers, and lastly the third section will be on the general benefits which we can get from our discussion on these verses today. Immediately after Allah SWT mentioned His *tabarak* (excessive good) and talked about His *rahmah* throughout the discussion on the 7 heavens or the 7 skies (*sab'a samawat*), He now brings our attention to the earth which we live in.

We have already mentioned that Surah Al-Mulk is considered as a late Makkiyah surah, a period when the Musyrikun Quraysh was so arrogant, thinking that their power and authority was absolute, while others, including Rasulullah SAW himself should not even try to come close, let alone challenge them. Allah SWT, while mentioning the beauty of the sky, shows His power which no other evil forces, such as Shaytan, can even come close to, let alone challenge Him, and the Shaytan himself was thrown into the Hellfire. Verse 5 below should give us some idea on this issue.

The verse is as follows:

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِلشَّيَاطِينِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ
السَّعِيرِ

5. And We have certainly beautified the nearest heaven with stars and have made [from] them what is thrown at the devils and have prepared for them the punishment of the Blaze.

While discussing about the nearest heaven or the world's sky, we should not forget on the importance of absorbing the concept of the 7 skies. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan said that the beginning of verse 5 is telling us something like "forget about the 7 skies". By observing the nearest heaven, we should be humble to Allah SWT. After discussing about the power, He has over the evil forces, He targets the disbelievers, and they too, like Shaytan, will be thrown into the Hellfire.

Let us now move on to verses 6, 7 and 8, which are as follows:

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

6. And for those who disbelieved in their Lord is the punishment of Hell, and wretched is the destination.

إِذَا أُلْقُوا فِيهَا سَمِعُوا لَهَا شَهيقًا وَهِيَ تَفُور

7. When they are thrown into it, they hear from its a [dreadful] inhaling while it boils up.

تَكَادُ تَمَيَّرُ مِنَ الْغَيْظِ ۖ كُلَّمَا أُلْقِيَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِير

8. It almost bursts with rage. Every time a company is thrown into it, its keepers ask them, "Did there not come to you a warner?"

Although not much have been discussed about Shaytan in this part, except for in verse 5, there are also examples in other verses which show that when Allah SWT talks about the nearest heaven, Allah would also mention how Shaytan was cursed.

The following verse (verse 12) of Surah Fussilat verse is one of the examples.

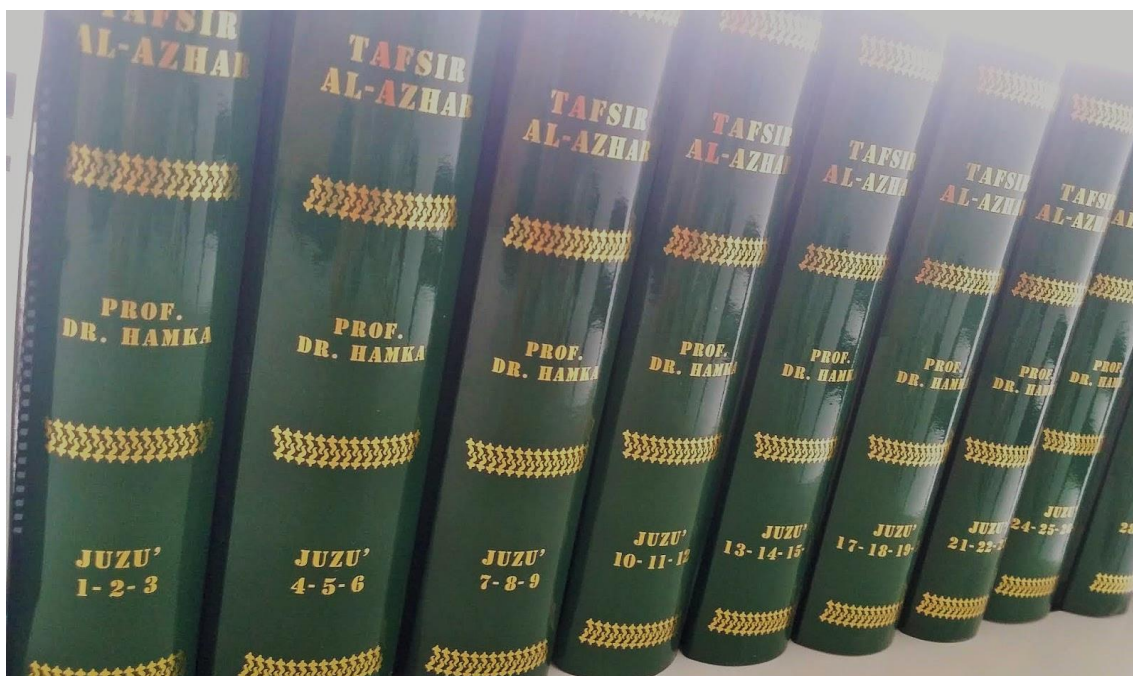
فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا ۗ وَزَيْنَا السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَحِفْظًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

And He completed them as seven heavens within two days and inspired in each heaven its command. And We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps and as protection (from the devils). That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, the Knowing.

(Al-Fussilat:12)

Now we shall turn our discussion to the close associates of Shaytan, who will also be thrown into the Hellfire. Inshaallah, we will highlight a few keywords to better understand the verses. The words which needs highlighting are “*shahiqa*” from verse 7 and “*nazir*” from verse 8. Those who are thrown into the Hellfire will be suffering. They will struggle to take breaths, just like an animal making noises when they are getting devoured by a predator.

Such sound of breathing is described by the word “*shahiqa*”, as mentioned by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan. The word “*nazir*” or “warner” in verse 8 is so important because when a huge bunch of people are thrown into the Hellfire, the guards (angels) will ask those people exasperatedly, “Did there not come to you a warner?”. The warner here does not specifically mean Rasulullah SAW, but just anyone. This implies that we have the responsibility to warn others.



Tafsir of the Quran by Prof. Dr. Hamka

Although the verses speak about the fate of the disbelievers, it does not mean that they do not concern us. First of all, we do not even know if we will continue to be a good Muslim, although we should always strive to be one till the end. Secondly, we might have someone close to us who refuses to follow the message of Allah SWT, and we too will be in trouble if we do not play our role as a warner. When the disbelievers are thrown into the Hellfire and become extremely horrified, they are asked if anyone has warned them.

Allah SWT states that they will answer the question, but shakingly and terrified. Verse 9 explains a little bit on this situation.

The verse is as follows:

قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَاءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنَّا أَنتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ كَبِيرٍ
 9. They will say, "Yes, a warner had come to us, but we denied and said, 'Allah has not sent down anything. You are not but in great error.'"

When we recite verses 8 and 9 of Surah Al-Mulk, not only should we try to understand the meaning, but we should also use different tones when reciting them; a stronger tone for verse 8 and a weaker tone for verse 9. Actually, verses 9, 10 and 11 are explanations on how those people (the disbelievers) will admit to their evil deeds, but it would already be too late. The next verses basically tell the case of those people in the Hellfire.

The verses are as follows:

وَقَالُوا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِي أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

10. And they will say, "If only we had been listening or reasoning, we would not be among the companions of the Blaze."

فَاعْتَرَفُوا بِذَنبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ

11. And they will admit their sin, so [it is] alienation for the companions of the Blaze.

Let us discuss a bit on the meaning of "Sa'ir" (Blaze) which has been mentioned 3 times throughout the verses in this session. The word Blaze is used here to not only say that Shaytan and the disbelievers will be perished by the fire, but they themselves are the kindling for the fire to stay ablazed.

As we know, in other surahs, such as Surah Ar-Rahman, the humans will be given a physical body over and over again in the afterlife. Therefore, they will be suffering the torment over and over again.

يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آتٍ

They will go around between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree].

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, they will be thrown into the boiling water, and their body will return back to the former condition and thrown again into the water. Before we end today's discussion, perhaps we also want to mention how Shaytan was thrown into the Hellfire. Besides human beings, another type of creature called Jinn will also be divided between those who are believers and disbelievers. Shaytan is categorised as a Jinn.

The point here is that even the disbelievers amongst the Jinn species who are made of fire will suffer when they are thrown into the Blaze. Why do we still want to be arrogant in front of Allah SWT when we can't even stand the heat of the world's fire, or even the heat radiating from the sun. If we can't fully grasp the concept of the 7 skies, which by right we should, by understanding the concept of the nearest sky, we should already be humble and be serious in seeking Allah's guide.

May Allah SWT guide us to the straight path and prevent us from being thrown into the Hellfire. May Allah SWT also allow us to enter *Jannah* without counting. With that we end today's session.

c. “Those Who Fear Allah In Secret”? (Verses 12-15)

InshaAllah, with Allah SWT’s guidance, we are now moving on to the third session on our discussion of Surah Al-Mulk. We have mentioned earlier that Surah Al-Mulk can be divided into 6 parts, and the second is the longest one, comprising of verses 5-15. This is to say that even though we are in the third session, we are still dwelling in the second part of the surah.

Although there are many views about who actually are the targeted audience of verses 12-15 when Allah SWT says the word “*yahshauna rabbahum*” (those who fear their Lord), we will only base our discussion on what Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan said, and he is more inclined to refer this group as those who made conviction to Islam in private, instead of in public, especially during the Meccan period. In general, other ulamas’ views on the message of verses 12-15 refer to those who live amongst the disbelievers, but do not follow the footsteps of the disbelievers, which turns themselves into the group which fears Allah in secret.

Inshaallah, we will explain further about this issue as we take a look at the verses themselves. In general, we will divide our discussion into a few sections. First, we will talk about the characteristics and blessings of those who follow Allah SWT in secret. The second section will be on Allah’s knowledge and wisdom. Lastly, we will discuss the symmetrical presentation of the second part of Surah Al-Mulk from verses 5-15, covering both the previous session and this session. Let us understand that so far, Allah SWT has mentioned about His *tabarak* (excess good), the concept of the 7 skies, the nearest sky and the 2 groups (Jinn and mankind) who will be thrown into the Blaze. Let us now have a look at verse 12 of Surah Al-Mulk, which talks about the blessings for those who fear Allah SWT in secret.

The verse is as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

12. *Indeed, those who fear their Lord unseen will have forgiveness and great reward.*

This verse is rather straightforward. Allah SWT will give forgiveness and a huge reward to those who fear Allah when they are unseen or in secret. However, on order to truly understand Surah Al-Mulk in general or in specific, one must contextualise the verses.

The verses refer to the Meccan period, when the opposition against Islam was so strong, and Muslims were persecuted and suffered different kinds of boycotts, tortures, etc. Wives and children had no voice or say in anything and had to follow their Musyrikun husbands or fathers.

In such context and setting of the late Meccan era, Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan explained that there were many people who were secretly or privately submitting themselves to Allah SWT's commands and rejected the idolatry actions. In fact, we know that many women had converted to Islam, although their husbands were not publicly following the message of truth. A classic example would be Umm Fadhl, the mother of Abdullah Ibn Abbas, and her husband (Abbas) who was Rasulullah's uncle. Many of them publicly converted only during or after the conquest of Mecca in 8th Hijrah. Wallahua'lam.

The said group will be rewarded by Allah, simply because although Allah, or the Rabb is unseen to them, they would still strongly believe in Allah SWT. Such people will be granted a huge reward by Allah SWT. The following verse informs us that to Allah SWT, it doesn't matter whether we publicly or secretly surrender ourselves to Allah SWT, Allah SWT will still know clearly what is in our hearts.

Verse 13 as follows explain the case:

وَأَسِرُّوا قَوْلَكُمْ أَوْ اجْهَرُوا بِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

13. *And conceal your speech or publicize it; indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts.*

We should also learn from the verse that what is in our hearts is crucial. Although appearance is important, substance is more important. In cases that we cannot publicly or outwardly practice our ibadats, we should not worry since Allah SWT also gives a huge reward to those who surrender to Allah in secret. Wallahua'lam. We have finished our discussion on the blessings and characteristics of those who fear Allah (the Unseen) in secret.

Now we turn our discussion to Allah SWT's attributes, which can be found in verse 14 of Surah Al-Mulk, which is as follows:

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ

14. *Does He who created not know, while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?*

This verse itself is a strong testimony to us that Allah SWT knows what He has created. This might bring our discussion to something that is philosophical in Islam, especially among great Muslim philosophers such as Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd. In one way influenced by the Greek thought, especially from the book *Metaphysics* by Aristotle, Ibn Sina had the tendency to suggest that of course Allah SWT is All-Knowing, but Allah's knowledge is universalistic, not particularistic. What Ibn Sina's line of argument states is

that Allah SWT does not know the specificity of something. Taking a present condition as an example, Ibn Sina's argument suggests that although Allah SWT is the All-Knowing, the knowledge on specific technicalities such as softwares and artificial intelligence are not in Allah's realm of knowledge. Wallahua'lam.

Imam al-Ghazali later rejected the claim by mentioning that it is stated in the Quran that Allah SWT even knows every moment a leaf falls to the ground.

The verse which mentions this is as follows:

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darknesses of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record.

To find a reconciliation, Ibn Rushd later said that when we talk about Allah SWT's knowledge, we should not imagine, or even try to compare our understanding about knowledge with the way Allah SWT's knowledge works. To cut it short, since Allah SWT created mankind and gave us knowledge, if those people create things such as softwares, that knowledge and idea came from the creation of Allah, therefore it originates from Allah SWT. Wallahua'lam.

Such discussion is available in Ibn Rushd's book *The Incoherence of the Incoherence (Tahafut at-Tahafut)*. Verse 14 of Surah Al-Mulk informs us of the same thing. Allah SWT definitely knows what He himself created, and more importantly, Allah mentioned His attributes of *Al-Latif* (The Subtle) and *Al-Khabir* (The Acquainted). "The Subtle" explains that Allah SWT knows what is hidden and He is softly meticulous in this, and the word "The Acquainted" refers to His knowledge on us that we received through something like our experience, not through reading. Wallahua'lam.

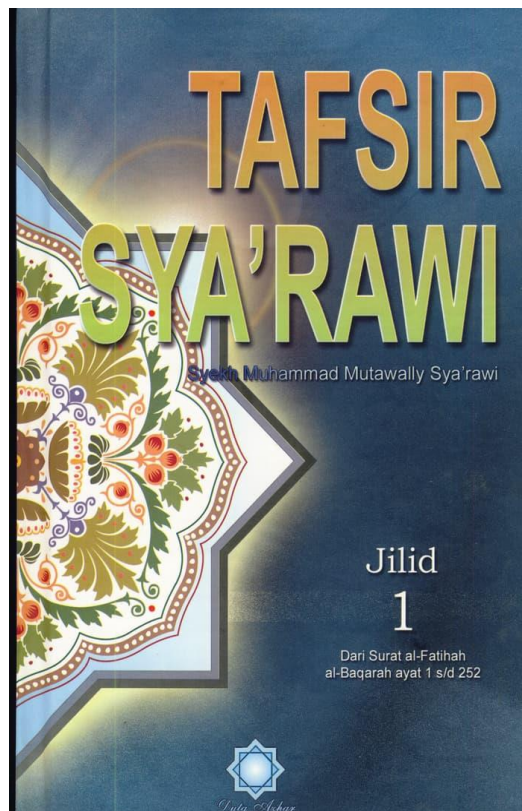
InshaAllah, we will now move on to the last verse of the second part of Surah Al-Mulk, which explains to us on the provision which Allah SWT had given us in this world and the importance for us to get the opportunity to travel so that we can observe the mighty creations of Allah SWT.

Below is the verse:

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

15. *It is He who made the earth tame for you - so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision - and to Him is the resurrection.*

When Allah SWT gave us everything that we have in this world, Allah SWT also reminded us that we will later be resurrected. While this verse should remind us that we are encouraged to travel and get benefit from Allah SWT's creations in this world, it should also remind us that we should not ignore the importance making *taqwa* and follow the rules and regulations, knowing that this is not the only world that we will live in, and that there is another world, which we will be resurrected in.



Tafsir of the Quran by Shaykh Muhammad Mutawalli

Let us now discuss the symmetry of this part of Surah Al-Mulk, which Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan wanted us to understand, not just the meaning, but also its beautiful presentation. This part begins by mentioning the limitation in this world for the Jinns or Shaytan, such as in verse 5 where Allah SWT mentioned that Shaytan will be thrown with something and thrown into the Hellfire. After the surah started with the limitation of the Shaytan, Allah SWT ended the part with a sort of freedom speech, such as found in verse 15. Furthermore, Allah SWT talked about the sky, followed by the earth, and this style of presentation is also continued in the next part of Surah Al-Mulk.

In fact, interestingly, Allah started with the stories about His *tabarak* and the 7 skies and ended with what were to happen on earth if He was to stop His *tabarak* in this world. We are safe only because of Allah SWT, the Ar-Rahman. Otherwise, we would definitely suffer. Adding on to that, we should note that the activities in this world are influenced by the Unseen World. Therefore, we should understand what exactly is in the 7 skies, because the activities in the 7 skies influence every activity in the nearest sky, the sky that we can see with our naked eyes. Those are some of the important symmetrical messages and linguistic aspects of Surah Al-Mulk, which we will InshaAllah try to look into in the next verses of Surah Al-Mulk, which we will talk about in the next session.

With that, we end today's session. May Allah SWT provide us with protection so that we can be amongst those who Allah SWT give reward abundantly to.

d. Observing Flocks of Birds in the Sky (Verses 16-19)

Inshaallah for today's session we will continue our discussion on Surah Al-Mulk, the surah in which not only about Allah's SWT *tabarak* (excess goodness) but also informs us how insignificant those who reject and are ungrateful to Allah SWT are. We have discussed in our previous session on how we should observe the seven skies phenomenon, followed by the nearest sky and in today's session Allah SWT expects us to observe the phenomenon of the birds in the sky.

In the last verse of our previous session (verse 15), Allah informs the believers, especially those amongst the secret believers to get the opportunity to travel in this world and to get Allah's provision.

In today's session, we are going to discuss, first, how Allah threatened the disbelievers, second, learning lessons from the past mistakes, and third, the importance for us to observe the phenomenon in of the flying birds in the sky. Before we begin, let's remind ourselves that there are many passages in this surah in which Allah talks about the heaven and earth. We should be informed that Surah Al-Mulk contains six parts and we are entering the third part. Although the third part covers verses 16-22, we will InshaAllah look at verses 16 to 19 only due to many important messages in these verses.

Let us look at how Allah threatened the disbelievers, both using the phenomenon of the earth and the heaven. Verses 16 and 17 below talk about two types of threats:

The verses are as follows:

أَأَمِنْتُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَنْ يَخْسِفَ بِكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَمُورُ

16. Do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven would not cause the earth to swallow you and suddenly it would sway?

Verse 16 discussed how Allah might cause a catastrophe on earth, such as earthquake for those who are stubbornly rejecting Allah. We already mentioned in the previous session that Surah Al-Mulk is a late Makkiyah surah in which the degree of stubbornness of the elite Musyrikun Quraysh were nowhere near tolerable. The Musyrikun Quraysh were known for not only rejecting the message of truth from Rasulullah, but also for thinking that nothing worse could happen to them.

We should understand as we read the Quran that the message is for all mankind and in some message, although the main audience of the surah were the Musyikrun idolaters. However, we should not be strayed by understanding that it does not concern us believers, just because initially the immediate target was the Musyrikun. Furthermore, we

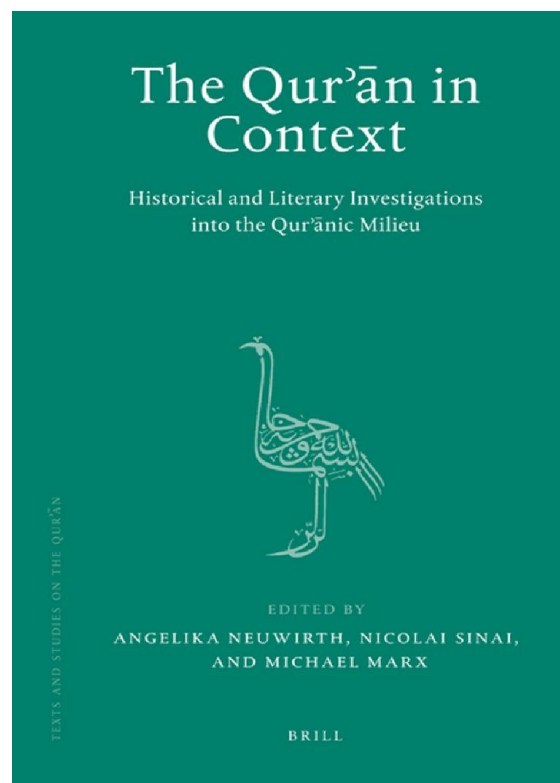
do not know how strong our Iman is and we do not know how true it is that we are safe from falling as one of the disbelievers. More importantly, as we should always seek guidance from it, we should see ourselves as the immediate target instead.

Verse 15 states how the earth or the world can be used by the believers to travel and seek for provision (*rizq*). In verse 16, however, Allah taught us how the same earth can be a source of threat for the disbelievers as well. We shall now move on to the next verse of Surah Al-Mulk, which is as follows:

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

17. Or do you feel secure that He who [holds authority] in the heaven would not send against you a storm of stones? Then you would know how [severe] was My warning.

The word “*hasiba*” (storm or stone) should remind us on the important event which was always stuck in the Quraysh’s minds. This is the time when Rasulullah was about to be born in Mecca and the Kaaba was being attacked by the Abrahah army. When Allah SWT mentions about the storm or stone, it should strongly remind them that such event can recur at any given time, as long as Allah wants it to.



The Quran in Context by Angelika Neuwirth

The following verses of Surah Al-Fil informs us how flocks of birds carried stones to storm the Abrahah army, until all of them died disastrously:

وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ

And He sent against them birds in flocks.

تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِنْ سِجِّيلٍ

Striking them with stones of hard clay.

فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَأْكُولٍ

And He made them like eaten straw. (Al-Fil: 3-5)

Not only should the Musyrikun idolaters, by right, relate this warning or threat about the storming stones from heaven to themselves because it is a historical fact, but Allah SWT also ends verse 17 by mentioning how accurate and crucial the warnings by the warner (Rasulullah SAW) are.

Let us continue our discussion by first having a look at verse 18 of Surah Al-Mulk, which is as follows:

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ

18. And already had those before them denied, and how [terrible] was My reproach.

Verse 18 informs how Allah SWT had destroyed the previous people who rejected and were ungrateful to Him. We have heard how different nations, such as the Thamud and 'Ad were destroyed by Allah SWT because of their arrogance. We hope that we are not among such people. Allah SWT in Surah Al-Kahfi states how we are "bad" as a human. Although we have been given the Quran, we always want to debate and wait as if what had happened to the people of the past will not happen to us.

Below are the verses of Surah Al-Kahfi (verses 54 & 55):

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا

And We have certainly diversified in this Qur'an for the people from every [kind of] example; but man has ever been, most of anything, [prone to] dispute.

وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا إِذْ جَاءَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ
أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ فُبُلًا

And nothing has prevented the people from believing when guidance came to them and from asking forgiveness of their Lord except that there [must] befall them the [accustomed] precedent of the former peoples or that the punishment should come [directly] before them.

Let us now move on to verse 19 of Surah Al-Mulk, the last verse for today, before we move on with our discussion.

The verse is as follows:

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

19. Do they not see the birds above them with wings outspread and [sometimes] folded in? None holds them [aloft] except the Most Merciful. Indeed, He is, of all things, Seeing.

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, not only the phrase which mentions the wings of birds as outspread and folded can be understood literally, but it can also mean that the flock of birds are flying widespread from each other and sometimes close to each other. We want to conclude today's session by mentioning 2 things from this verse.

First of all, this surah teaches us to see Allah SWT's power, not only as reflected in the 7 skies and the nearest sky, but even nearer than that, which is the phenomenon of birds flying in flocks. By default, everything, even birds will succumb to gravity, but due to Allah SWT being Ar-Rahman, not only can the birds go against gravity, but they are also able to fly for a long, long time.

Secondly, for the Arabs, birds tell them on many things, including good and bad omens. They should know that Allah had once destroyed an army with a flock of birds, and Allah can destroy them, and us as well, at any given time, if we are stubborn and arrogant. May Allah SWT prevent us from such arrogance and stupidity.

With that, we will end today's session

e. The Mentality of the Disbelievers (Verses 20-22)

InshaAllah, in our session today, we will continue our small effort to understand and discuss Surah Al-Mulk, focusing on verses 20-22. As we have already mentioned previously, Surah Al-Mulk can be divided into 6 parts, and we are going to discuss the second portion of Part 3, covering 3 verses mentioned above. Like Part 2, Part 3 of this surah also comprises of 2 portions. In the first portion, we have highlighted the following in the previous session:

First, Allah SWT challenged and threatened the disbelievers by showing His power and majesty, in which the earth and heavens can be the source of their disaster and demise. Immeasurable catastrophe can be caused by the earth, while the raining down of stones can come from the sky or heaven. Secondly, we have been told to learn by observing flocks of birds flying in the sky after observing the 7 skies (*sab'a samawat*) and the nearest sky or the physical sky which we can see with our naked eyes. Thirdly, we have also said that Allah SWT will repeat the phenomenon of the 7 skies (heavens) and the earth over and over, as both are rather important messages as well as rhetorical devices to get the message across more effectively.

Verses 20-22 which we are going to discuss today are very much in similar form with the ones before, with its rhetorical theme, which we will see in verses 20 and 21. Let us now have a look at verse 20 to start with.

The verse is as follows:

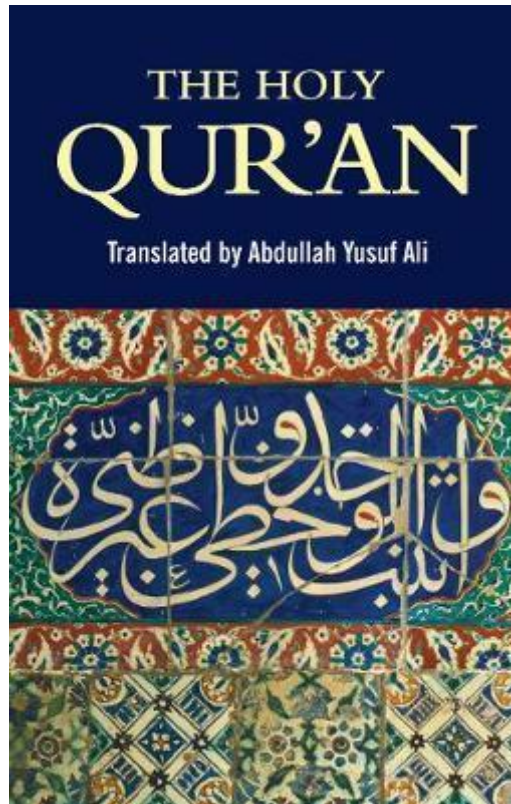
أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ جُنْدٌ لَكُمْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ ۗ إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي غُرُورٍ

20. Or who is it that could be an army for you to aid you other than the Most Merciful?
The disbelievers are not but in delusion.

In this verse, we can learn at least 3 important points. Surah Al-Mulk is a late Makkiyah surah, and the army in this verse refers to the people who were behind the elite Musyrikun idolaters led by people such as Abu Jahl and Umayyah ibn Khalaf, just to name a few. Who do these people think they are in this world to reject and be ungrateful to Allah SWT and try to form a group, as if an army, to disagree and attack Rasulullah SAW, therefore attacking Allah SWT?

Secondly, like in other verses, in this verse, the word Ar-Rahman (The Most Merciful) is used, implying that the group they formed was only possible due to the generosity of Allah SWT. How far they have misled themselves from the truth. Thirdly, the words *Jund* and *Ghurur* are used to clearly indicate how insignificant and small (*Jund*) they were

compared to who they were opposing, the Prophet and Allah SWT Himself. How delusional they were.



Tafsir of the Quran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali

While verse 20 mentions about how ignorant or stupid the disbelievers were in this earth, verse 21 informs us how without Allah SWT's blessings from the heaven, they would be meaningless in this earth. Let us have a look at verse 21, which is as follows:

أَمَّنْ هَذَا الَّذِي يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُ ۗ بَلْ لَجُّوا فِي عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ

21. Or who is it that could provide for you if He withheld His provision? But they have persisted in insolence and aversion.

There are 2 big parts in this verse; the first talks about Allah SWT's provision, while the second talks about the disbelievers' mentality. A little bit about the history of Mecca, there was a long period of time when the city became dead due to lack of natural resources. Unlike Medina, Khaybar or Yemen, Mecca was known for being very hot and dry. Only the rediscovery of the zamzam water made the city got its life back. With the water, people began to forget about Allah SWT's provision, and therefore they thought that they could do anything they wanted to without Allah SWT.

As we can see in Surah Al-Mulk, Allah SWT threatened them with the thought of what would happen if He dried up the water, which according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, is referring to the zamzam water. At this point, Allah SWT pointed out that even the provision which they enjoy at that moment was from Allah SWT. Who did they think they were? Immediately afterwards, Allah SWT talks about their character or mentality, which can be categorised into 3, persistence (*Lajju*), insolence (*'Utww*) and aversion (*Nufur*).

Of course, persistence can be a positive thing, but not in the case of these Musyrikun idolaters which the verse is referring to. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mentioned the New-Atheist group whose approach is very radical, frequently rejected by the atheists themselves. The Musyrikun idolaters were so radical to the point that they made fun of Allah SWT's messages. Na'uzubillahi min zalik.

They were also insolent and disrespectful. The disbelievers would already decide that their opponents were wrong, and instead of listening to their argument, they would prepare a counter argument to harshly pin down their enemies' thought. Furthermore, they were very aversive. They would just fly off at any time in the middle of an argument or a discussion, when they felt like the other person's argument was stupid or nonsensical compared to their own opinion, due to their *Lajju* and *'Utww*.

Allah SWT Himself informed us of the mentality of the disbelievers. If we are to encounter them, we should be prepared and expect the 3 characters mentioned by Allah SWT. Let us now turn to the last verse for today's session, the verse which informs us of the opposing characters of the disbelievers and the believers.

The verse is as follows:

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

22. Then is one who walks fallen on his face better guided or one who walks erect on a straight path?

The verse is very swift and straightforward, and the words *mukibban* and *sawiyyan* are used. The word *mukibban* (fallen) is used for those who stumbled on earth, in other words the disbelievers. These are the disbelievers who were busy and struggling, trying to get material benefits in this world, forgetting that Allah SWT told us to observe the 7 skies and the flock of birds in the sky, as discussed in previous sessions.

Not everything that we want in this world can be retrieved easily. Those who fail to learn from Allah SWT's message of truth will think that this world is not only too important for them, but they will fail to see the straight path in which there is a Hereafter where we will

be resurrected in *Yaumul Mahsyar* to decide our fate, whether we are of the people of Jannah or the people of Jahannam.

We have discussed in verse 12 of Surah Al-Mulk about those who secretly believe in Allah, and there are many verses in the Quran, such as in verses 15 and 16 of Surah As-Sajdah which say that while disbelievers are characterised as persistently insolent and aversive, the believers are characterised as those who would make *sajdah* when the name of Allah SWT is mentioned to them. Not only that, they would also spend their night worshipping only Allah SWT, and spend Allah's provision to give to others who are in need.

The following are verses 15 and 16 of Surah As-Sajdah:

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

Only those believe in Our verses who, when they are reminded by them, fall down in prostration and exalt [Allah] with praise of their Lord, and they are not arrogant.

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

They arise from [their] beds; they supplicate their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend.

Before we end today's session, let us mention a few important points. Portions 1 and 2 of Part 3 of Surah Al-Mulk, which we have discussed in sessions 4 and 5 tell us on the importance of observing and learning Allah's *tabarak* (excess good) over His creations, be it from the sky or from the heavens. Secondly, Allah SWT can also use the same earth and heavens as sources for threats and punishments, but Allah SWT mentioned multiple times that He is the Most Generous (*Ar-Rahman*). Allah has executed the punishments for the people of the past, such as the people of Thamud and 'Ad, but He has yet to execute these punishments onto us, and even the Musyrikun idolaters of the Prophet's time, which informs us that He is the Most Generous, although He has the power to execute it at anytime He wants.

Thirdly, always observe Allah SWT's power and mercy by observing things such as how birds can continue to fly over and over again, while by default, everything is affected by gravity. Always observe the nearest sky and the movement of stars which we benefit a lot from, and always observe spiritually, the phenomenon of the 7 skies (*sab'a samawat*) in which only those with a pure heart can believe and feel their presence, therefore have faith or Iman in the *tabarak* of Allah SWT. For the record, Surah Al-Mulk is a surah which, at the beginning, Allah SWT Himself spoke directly to mostly the disbelievers who are

arrogant. After He mentioned about the importance for them, and of course us as well to observe the 7 skies, the nearest sky and the birds, they are still *mukibban* (fallen) because they are always looking at the earth.

In the subsequent verses of Surah Al-Mulk, which we will InshaAllah discuss in the next session, Allah SWT will ask the Prophet SAW himself to talk to them. As we shall see, the word "*Kul*" (Say (O' Muhammad)) will be repeated multiple times. May we be amongst the believers, and not amongst those with the 3 bad characters; the disbelievers.

With that, we will end today's session.

f. The Sarcasms of the Disbelievers (Verses 23-27)

With Allah's blessing and guide, we have completed the first 3 parts of our discussion on Surah Al-Mulk, from verse 1 to verse 22. We have another 3 parts left, covering verses 23-30. It is obvious to us that the remaining parts (4,5 and 6) of Surah Al-Mulk are much shorter compared to the first 3. Hence, in today's session, we will InshaAllah combine parts 4 and 5 together, covering verses 23-24 (Part 4) and 25-27 (Part 5). As we shall see, only with some interspersing, all verses from Part 4 to Part 6 start with the word "Kul" (Say (O'Muhammad)), unlike the previous parts where Allah SWT speaks directly to the people, mostly the disbelievers who are known to be ungrateful and reject Allah SWT.

This, in some way, informs us how insignificant and weak those who disbelieve Allah SWT, since Allah SWT does not want to talk to them, except through Rasulullah SAW. Let us look at verse 23, when it becomes clear to us that the disbelievers will not be able to get benefit from observing the 7 skies, the nearest sky as well as the birds flying in the sky.

The verse is as follows:

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

23. Say, "It is He who has produced you and made for you hearing and vision and hearts; little are you grateful."

Although verse 23 seems straightforward, there's still a lot to take from this verse. For example, let us discuss the word "Ansha'akum" which, according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, carries more than one meaning, because Allah SWT did not use the word "Halq". The word "Ansha'akum" carries meanings such as birth, growth and maturity. In this context, the Musyrikun were nothing without Allah SWT's help. They began to think that things happened naturally, or just like a custom, people get civilised through their own efforts, without Allah's help.

Surah Quraysh in the Juz Amma informs us how they took Allah's rahmah to them for granted. The verses which tells the story is as follows:

لِإِيْلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ

For the accustomed security of the Quraysh.

إِيْلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

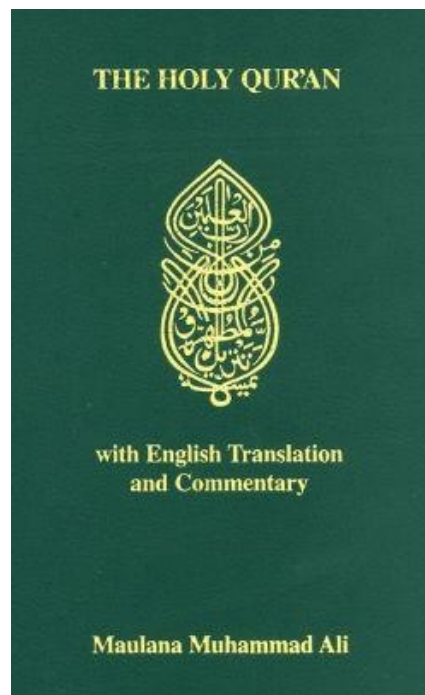
Their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer. (Al-Quraysh: 1-2)

The word "*Rihlatassyita iwassay*" refers to a trade road connecting Syria, which is in the north, and Yemen, in the south. We have discussed previously that before the rediscovery of the Zamzam Well, the city was dead. Mecca was a hot city with no expected cultivation. The Quraysh people were chosen by Allah and they were given a lot of rahmah and help by Allah SWT. Not only the Zamzam water, but they were also once helped by Allah from the sky through *Ababil* (flock of birds, thrashing Abrahah's army). They were "*Ansha'a*" only through Allah SWT's help.

We should know that we got matured not naturally, but through Allah SWT's help. This was the message for them, and a message for us too. The word "*Ilaa*" in Surah Quraysh is a strong word which implies that the Quraysh took their "civilization" as a natural product. If we have the same thinking, be worried that we are no different from them. Allah SWT informed how ungrateful these people were.

However, before He ended with that statement, Allah SWT said that they have already been given the ability to hear, see and perceive. Hearing was the main form of communication in those days, since most of them could not read. They, and ourselves as well, should attentively listen to Revelation (such as this surah, Surah Al-Mulk) and see what we were asked to see and observe (7 skies, nearest sky, flocks of birds in the sky).

If we are arrogant and stubborn, our heart will definitely not be able to perceive Allah SWT's message. Therefore, the words used are "*as-sama*", "*al-absar*", and "*al-af'idah*" which is to listen, see and perceive the messages with a pure heart.



Tafsir of the Quran by Maulana Muhammad Ali

The next verse, verse 24 of Surah Al-Mulk tells the fate of those who continue to be stubborn, not only refusing to listen, see and perceive, but continue with the mentality of *lajjuu* (persistence), *utuww* (insolence) and *nufur* (aversion), the characteristics of the disbelievers as discussed in the previous session, in verse 21.

Verse 24 is as follows:

قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ

24. Say, " It is He who has multiplied you throughout the earth, and to Him you will be gathered."

According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the word *zara'akum* (multiplied) should be understood much better, because there is in fact a purpose why Allah SWT used the particular word itself. Like the word "*Ansha'a*" which brings the idea of birth, growth and matured, the word "*zara'a*" gives us the idea of getting old, with white hair and wrinkled skin, then gathered in the Hereafter. The word "*Tuhsyarun*" is commonly used for animals instead of humans, when they are gathered. This imposes that the disbelievers are so insignificant in Allah SWT's eyes, and their level have been brought down to the level of animals.

We have already discussed how the disbelievers will make sounds like animals getting devoured when they are thrown into the Hellfire, expressed in the word "*shahiqa*" (dreadful inhaling) in verse 7. May Allah SWT protect us from falling into the fray of the disbelievers. May Allah SWT raise our status to the *Ashabul Yamin*, although we want to be raised to the status of *Assabikun*, just like the sahabahs and the awliya.

Basically, we have finished discussing on Part 4. Therefore, we shall now move on to Part 5, which covers verses 25-27. So far, we have discussed that the disbelievers will be gathered like animals. We have also discussed that they will be thrown into the Hellfire. Of course, we now know that they also have terrible mentality. When they were told that there is going to be a resurrection, in which they will be gathered like animals, they responded sarcastically, and verse 25 is the standard for their response to the warning.

Verse 25 is as follows:

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

25. And they say, "When is this promise, if you should be truthful?"

Of course, “the promise” here refers to the Resurrection Day, and the day of their punishments. In the Quran, Allah SWT mentioned at least 7 times on the way the disbelievers responded to Allah SWT’s promises, such as in Surah Yasin and Surah As-Sajdah, except that in Surah As-Sajdah, there is the word “*fathu*”. Note that when the word “*yakulu*” is used in the Quran, it always follows with the statement on the people Allah SWT dislikes. This word is also ubiquitous in the Quran.

Of course, the Musyrikun idolaters were not only talking sarcastically to the Prophet SAW alone. The word “*kuntum*”, (you (plural)) refers to the sahabahs who sacrificed their time, wealth and even life to spread the message of truth. Spreading the message of truth is not an easy business, compared to performing *ibadahs* such as praying and fasting. The rulings on fasting, wearing hijab, etc. came from Medinan revelations. The closest sahabahs are raised the status of *Assabikun* because they were among the first to talk to others and spread the message of truth.

We today, Alhamdulillah and InshaAllah, have no big issue to pray and fast, because we know the obligatory nature of the *ibadahs*. We should inform people who do not pray and fast to perform prayers and to fast, such as to our family members or even to outsiders. Our role is to spread the message of truth, to warn others on the Resurrection Day, just like the the role of the sahabahs, who learned it from Rasulullah SAW. However, what do we have to say if they ask us such sarcastic and provoking questions? Allah SWT teaches us to say the following verse,

قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ

26. Say, "The knowledge is only with Allah, and I am only a clear warner."

The word “*nazir*” appears twice in Surah Al-Mulk; once in this verse, verse 26 and once more in verse 8, which is when the guard of the Hellfire asks the believers on whether a warner came to them. According to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, the word “*nazir*” applies to everyone, not just Rasulullah SAW in specific. We have the role, not to just pray and fast, but to also spread the message of truth to the people. InshaAllah, we will now move on to the last verse of Part 5, which is verse 27.

The verse is as follows:

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيئَتْ وُجُوهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقِيلَ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَدْعُونَ

27. But when they see it approaching, the faces of those who disbelieve will be distressed, and it will be said, "This is that for which you used to call."

The verse says that when the Resurrection Day is clearly in front of our eyes, those who disbelieved will be terribly panicked and distressed, not only because they were stubborn and arrogant, but also because they never made preparations for the Day. May Allah SWT guide us, so that we may be amongst the people who prepared plenty to face the Resurrection Day. To have that guidance, we have the role in front of us, which is not only to practice what we have been asked to, but also to spread the message of Islam.

With that being said, we shall end today's session. May Allah forgive our shortcomings and also the shortcomings our parents may have committed.

g. The Weakness of the Disbelievers (Verses 28-30)

Only through Allah SWT's *rahmah* are we able to reach the final part of our discussion on Surah Al-Mulk, and in this last part, which is Part 6, we will discuss the last 3 verses, verses 28-30. So far, we have discussed how stubborn and arrogant the disbelievers were during the late Meccan period. We have mentioned that not only were the Muslims boycotted, but there was also a point when a plan existed to assassinate the Prophet SAW. One of the major concerns on the disbelievers or the atheists today is that they reject the concept of the Day of Resurrection, especially on the concept of bodily or physical resurrection.

In the previous session we have mentioned how they made sarcasms when Allah SWT, through Rasulullah SAW, mentioned that they will be gathered or resurrected during the Judgement Day. In today's session, we want to look at how weak the disbelievers actually are, not only in the eyes of Allah SWT, but also in the eyes of those who believe in Allah SWT. Let us have a look at verse 28 to start off today's session.

The verse is as follows:

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكْنِي اللَّهُ وَمَنْ مَعِيَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَنْ يُجِيرُ الْكَافِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

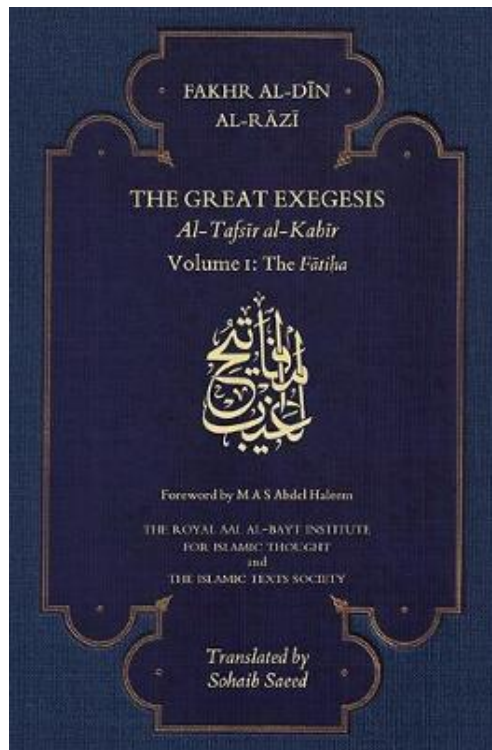
28. Say, [O Muhammad], "Have you considered: whether Allah should cause my death and those with me or have mercy upon us, who can protect the disbelievers from a painful punishment?"

The first part of the verse tells us that even if the Musyrikun Quraysh wanted to kill the Prophet SAW and those in his side, they will not be able to do it without Allah SWT's permission. This is a strong theological (*aqidah*) stand for us to understand because in our effort to spread the message of truth, we should not be scared of any kind of threats from others. This is so because any bad things will not be able to occur unless with Allah SWT's permission.

The second part of the verse tells the disbelievers, which in those days were amongst the Musyrikun Quraysh, that if they were to kill the Prophet SAW and his companions, who is going to tell them about the message of truth? They will then end up unguided and therefore getting severe penalties and punishments in the Hellfire.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan gave an excellent example when he said that if meteorologists (people who study and predict weather) or the media informs us that there is going to be a thunderstorm, or in our case, a tsunami, if we don't like the media or the meteorologists and we turn it off or kill them, if we think that the catastrophe will stop, we are indeed very stupid. This was the case with the people like Abu Jahl and Umayyah ibn Khalaf. They

think that by killing the Prophet SAW, they will not face the severe punishments of the Judgement Day.



Tafsir of the Quran by Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi

Let us look at verse 29 before we continue our discussion any further.

قُلْ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ أَمَّنًا بِهِ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ

29. Say, "He is the Most Merciful; we have believed in Him, and upon Him we have relied. And you will [come to] know who it is that is in clear error."

The verse informs us that Allah SWT is the Ar-Rahman. We should remember that all of the 3 verses in this part begins with the word "Ku" (Say (O' Muhammad)). Allah SWT is asking Prophet Muhammad SAW to say that he and the other companions are on the side of Allah SWT. Those who are against them are amongst those who are in clear error and astrayed. This verse should also inform us that we should rely totally on Allah SWT in our effort to spread the message of Islam, believing that Allah SWT will show His mercy if we are on Allah SWT's side. Even though we die, we should not be worried because Allah SWT's promise of Jannah is not going to be left unfulfilled.

The last verse of Surah Al-Mulk (verse 30) informs the Musyrikun Quraysh that their status and "civilization" will be meaningless and will be destroyed if Allah SWT was to take back the only resources they have (the Zamzam Well).

Before we continue our discussion, let us take a look at the verse first, which is as follows:

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَاؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَنْ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِمَاءٍ مَعِينٍ

30. Say, "Have you considered: if your water was to become sunken [into the earth], then who could bring you flowing water?"

With Allah SWT's rahmah, the water (Zamzam) is still available until today. If we notice that in our previous session, we mentioned that the Musyrikun idolaters continued to remain stubborn despite being threatened by Allah SWT that there would be no rain (provision from the sky) because they know that even without rain, they can still rely on the water from the earth. Not only did Allah SWT inform them in verse 30 that the water from below is also Allah SWT's rahmah from them, and if Allah SWT wants to take back the water, which He is able to at any time, they would be left with no resources at all.

If we notice, the structure of Surah Al-Mulk from the very beginning to the end, Allah SWT continued informing us on how stubborn and arrogant the Musyrikun idolaters were. At the same time, Allah SWT also stated continuously that they continued with their mentality, despite Allah SWT's warnings after warnings. Both, the linear progression and symmetrical connection of the verses in Surah Al-Mulk is mentioned in Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan's discussion. The progression of this Surah occurs under 6 waves: -

It begins with information on Allah SWT's power over His creations, including the creation of the 7 sky (*sab'a samawat*), followed by the nearest sky. In the second part, Allah SWT informs us how Shaytan (Jinn) was thrown into the realm of the nearest sky, and both the Shaytan and disbelievers will be thrown into the Hellfire. Allah SWT continues to inform us in the next section on the threats after threats to the disbelievers while asking us to look at Allah SWT's power over the flocks of birds flying in the sky. Of course, we should be scared by Allah SWT's threats even though his earlier messages were targeted to the Musyrikun Quraysh. After all, the Quran is continuously applicable to the mankind.

In the fourth part, Allah SWT tells us on our short life, while in the fifth part, Allah SWT mentions that we should not be sarcastic or sceptical, but instead have strong conviction on the coming of the Resurrection Day. In the last part, Part 6 says that there is nothing that we can do, whether mankind believes or does not believe on the message of truth, the punishments will still happen and be given to those who disbelieve.

How is Surah Al-Mulk connected symmetrically? Part 1 and Part 6 have symmetrical connections because the former talks about Allah SWT's power, and the latter talks about the humankind's weakness. In fact, in the first verse, Allah SWT talks about His dominion,

in which there are many verses in the Quran which mentions that the dominion is covered by water.

Below is an example of such verse:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَلَئِنَّ قُلُوبَ إِيَّائِكُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ

And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days - and His Throne had been upon water - that He might test you as to which of you is best indeed. But if you say, "Indeed, you are resurrected after death," those who disbelieve will surely say, "This is not but obvious magic." (Hud: 7)

In the last verse (verse 30), Allah SWT talks to us about how weak we are going to be if Allah SWT no longer give us water. Part 2 talks about the Judgement Day and the Hellfire, and Part 5 on the other side of the symmetry talks about how the disbelievers are stubborn and question the coming of the Judgement Day. While Part 3 talks about the threats to the disbelievers, Part 4 informs how short our life is, hence we should quickly respond to Allah SWT's threats by not only doing good such as by worshipping, but also by spreading the message of truth to others. Wallahua'lam.

May Allah SWT give barakah to our small effort to have Surah Al-Mulk discussed in this series. With that, we end today's session. May Allah SWT forgive the mistakes we have committed in the process. Aameen.

h. Surah Al-Waqi'ah and the Judgement Day (Verses 1-12)

We begin the second half of this tazkirah series by taking a look at Surah Al-Waqi'ah, the 56th surah in the Quran, comprising of 96 verses. We want to begin by first mentioning 3 significant points. First, like many Makkiyah surahs, this surah deals on issues concerning the Judgement Day, in which people are divided into 3 groups; the Companions of the Right (*Ashabul Yamin*), the Companions of the Left (*Ashabul Shimal*), and the First and Foremost (*Assabikun*).

Secondly, as said by Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, this surah is the mirror-image of Surah Ar-Rahman, and both of them discuss about Allah SWT's power and mercy, as well as the reward of Jannah and the punishment of the Hellfire. Rhetorical devices, such as the phrase "Fabiayyiala irabbikuma tukazziban" in Surah Ar-Rahman are also used in Surah Al-Waqi'ah, which InshaAllah we will talk about in the process.

Thirdly, like the many names for the Judgement Day, which ulamas mentioned that there are more than 40 phrases or words used to name it, Al-Waqi'ah is a name which should make us feel stricken. If we do not feel shocked by the word Al-Waqi'ah, at least we should be shocked by other words such as Al-Qari'ah, Al-Haqq or Al-Zalزالah, or the many other names which have similar trajectory.

Against the backdrop, InshaAllah we will begin discussing this surah, Surah Al-Waqi'ah, by discussing the first 3 verses.

The verses are as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ

1. *When the Occurrence occurs.*

كَاذِبَةٌ لَوْفَعَتِهَا لَيْسَ

2. *There is, at its occurrence, no denial.*

خَافِضَةٌ رَافِعَةٌ

3. *It will bring down [some] and raise up [others].*

The word "waqi'ah" is translated here as "occurrence", which obviously refers to the Judgement Day or the Resurrection Day. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan explained that the

word “*waqi’ah*” has the connotation of the word falling (from the word “*waqi’*”). Although it is in the form of past tense, the word “*iza*” in the beginning of the first verse tells us that it is in the future, hence the Judgement Day.

The second verse refers to an extremely horrifying situation of the occurrence of the Judgement Day which no one can deny. Ulamas explained 3 situations how people are completely unable to deny it. One such example is those who are still able to deny their problems by whatever means. During the End Day, even such people are not able to do as such when they themselves witness the occurrence.



In that Day, as stated in the third verse, Allah SWT will change people’s status. Those who are high in status in this world will be ugly and low in status in the Akhirah, depending on their *taqwa*. It should give us a clear message that our status in this world is nothing in the eyes of Allah SWT, and there is no reason at all for us to be proud of whatever we have in this present world, or for us to be demotivated for whatever we do not have. InshaAllah, we shall continue our discussion with verses 4-6.

The verses are as follows:

إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًّا

4. When the earth is shaken with convulsion

وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًّا

5. *And the mountains are broken down, crumbling*

فَكَانَتْ هَبَاءً مُنْبَثًّا

6. *And become dust dispersing.*

The 3 verses here are very transparent, and they should remind us of many verses in the Quran which points us to the similar immeasurable magnitude and degree of catastrophic destruction during the end of the world. Verses 4 and 5 from Surah Al-Qari'ah should also shake our hearts on how terrifying the Day will be.

The verses from Surah Al-Qari'ah are as follows:

يَوْمَ يَكُونُ النَّاسُ كَالْفَرَاشِ الْمَبْثُوثِ

It is the Day when people will be like moths, dispersed.

وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ الْمَنْفُوشِ

And the mountains will be like wool, fluffed up.

We should be thankful to Allah for informing us in advance vividly about the Final Day, so that we are able to make early preparations before the occurrence by being a good *Mu'min*.

Let us turn the discussion to verse 7-9 of Surah Al-Waqi'ah which tells that there are 3 groups of people which will be visible in the World After.

The verses are as follows:

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً

7. *And you become [of] three kinds:*

فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ

8. *Then the Companions of the Right - what are the Companions of the Right?*

وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ

9. *And the Companions of the Left - what are the Companions of the Left?*

We have been told that there will be people who will be given their record book from the right hand, and these are the people of *Jannah* (Paradise), while there will also be people who will receive their record from the left hand, and these are the people of *Jahannam*

(Hellfire). We may have noticed there are repeated words in verses, such as the words “*Maimanah*” and “*Mash’amah*”, implying the degree of blissfulness and sorrowfulness the polar opposite groups will go through.

Note that good and bad people may stick together in this world, but in the Day of Reckoning, we will be completely separated. The third group which can be seen in the World After is the *Assabikun*, the First and Foremost, which the prophets, the sahabahs, and the *awliya’* are entitled to. While the *Ashabul Yamin* will be given the reward of Paradise based on their record books, no such record books are necessary for the *Assabikun*, the selected elites. The following verses explain those entitled as *Assabikun*:

وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ

10. *And the forerunners, the forerunners -*

أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ

11. *Those are the ones brought near [to Allah]*

فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ

12. *In the Gardens of Pleasure,*

The Forerunners, or the First and Foremost, are given special status in Paradise. In fact, in Surah Ar-Rahman, Allah SWT mentions about the different types and levels of Paradise, and Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mentioned the specific types and levels of Paradise in Surah Ar-Rahman for this group. We may be familiar with our day-to-day situation, in which certain elite groups will not go through inspection by the securities while others will have to. This is the case for the *Assabikun* in the World After.

May Allah SWT raise our status to the *awliya’* (the friends of Allah) so that we can be a part of the *Assabikun*. With that, we end today’s session.

i. Reward for the *Assabikun* (Verses 13-26)

InshaAllah, we continue our discussion of Surah Al-Waqi'ah, and in today's session, we will discuss from verse 13 to verse 26. We have mentioned about the three groups of people which Allah referred to in this surah; *Assabikun* (the First and Foremost), *Ashabul Yamin* (the Right Hand) and *Ashabus Shimal* (the Left Hand). In this session, we will InshaAllah discuss about two things. First, the in-depth discussion about *Assabikun*, and secondly about the somewhat detailed illustration of the environment and situation in Paradise. Specific on the illustration of Paradise, we should remind ourselves about what Ibn Abbas (died in 73H), the great companion, said about the story or illustration of Paradise. Among other things that we should understand is the real or actual things in Paradise are not known to us simply because our mind is just not able to understand it. The actual *Jannah* or even the World After itself is clearly beyond human comprehension. The information that we learn from the Quran is just the way Allah SWT informs us about it, so with our limited ability of mind, we can gauge the hint of it. Wallahua'lam.

Let us start looking at verse 13, the verse that requires an in-depth explanation.

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ

13. A [large] company of the former peoples.

وَقَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ

14. And a few of the later peoples.

Who are these people? There are many ways that ulamas explain about these two verses. Some refer the large group as the group during Rasulullah's generation and the small group as the selected group of our time. Some even mention that it refers to a group prior to Rasulullah and the group from Rasulullah's time until the Judgement Day. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan in reconciling the views by mentioning that whatever the case, it still refers to the *Assabikun*, the First and Foremost or the Forerunners.

This is the group which Allah refers to, in verses 11, 12 and 13 of this surah, as the closest group to Allah SWT. Does such group, which is closest to Allah still exists today? If so, what is the percentage? This question is very important because Allah mentioned that it was large in the beginning and small in the end.

We have already mentioned in our previous session that the Prophet's sahabahs and the awliyas are among the *Assabikun*, and our opportunity to be an awliya is still wide open and we should definitely grab it. Allah is the Most Just. Although we obviously cannot be a Prophet and a sahabah or a sahabiyat, the opportunity to be an awliya (friend of Allah)

is still there. Although we are small in terms of percentage, we must understand and be thankful to Allah not only because of the chance to be amongst *Assabikun* still exists. Given the billions of Muslims in this world today, the minute percentage is still huge. We should blame ourselves if we do not strive to be the *Assabikun*, those who enter *Jannah* without inspection and counting.

The following verses, from ayat 15 to 26 are about the illustration of those *Assabikun* in Paradise. InshaAllah, we will only gloss over it and we should remind ourselves about what Ibn Abbas said about our limited ability to comprehend the real “idea” of paradise.



The following are verses 15-17:

عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مَّوْضُونَةٍ

15. On thrones woven [with ornament],

مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَابِلِينَ

16. Reclining on them, facing each other.

يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُخَلَّدُونَ

17. *There will circulate among them young boys made eternal*

The idea that there will be a reclining bed is nearly everywhere in the Quran, and the “wildan al-mukhalladun” (eternal boys) are also available in Surah Al-Insan, verse 19, which is as follows:

وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُخَلَّدُونَ إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَنثورًا

There will circulate among them young boys made eternal. When you see them, you would think them [as beautiful as] scattered pearls.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan explained this verse by using a metaphor of a boy or a teenager getting a job. Not only do they enjoy the job but there are willing to do more than expected. For them, a small amount of penny is a huge reward. If we are surrounded by this kind of teenagers who are so enthusiastic doing their work, there is no way that we will get annoyed with their helps and services. By looking at their enjoyment doing their works, we will already be happy. Plus, they are there to serve drinks to us too.

Speaking of drinks, the following verse discusses about the type of drinks and food that those in Paradise will enjoy.

بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقَ وَكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ

18. *With vessels, pitchers and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring -*

لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُنْزِفُونَ

19. *No headache will they have therefrom, nor will they be intoxicated -*

It is important for us to have some knowledge on those who drink and get drunk in this world. It is said that the enjoyment they get when they drink and get drunk is that they can forget about the past and the future, implying no problems of the past and no fear of the future are in their minds when in their drunken state.

However, although they might forget about the problems and fear, and are presumably in the state of happiness, they are unconscious about their happiness, therefore, it is basically pointless. Not only will they get a headache afterwards, they will also suffer intoxication.

In the Paradise, not only will Allah SWT allow us to drink, we will be conscious about the blissfulness and there will be no problem of headache nor intoxication. Everything is

opposite from what happens in this world, but our limited mind cannot fully comprehend what exactly is the situation in Paradise. The following verses are about the fruits and meat in Paradise:

وَفَاكِهَةٍ مِّمَّا يَتَخَيَّرُونَ

20. And fruit of what they select

وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ

21. And the meat of fowl, from whatever they desire.

Besides all the drinks and food mentioned in these verses, Allah also mentioned about the “*huur*” (fair women) in Paradise. Discussion about the “*huur*” is made in detail in Surah Ar-Rahman, and we will mention in detail about the presence of fair women, which the issue in question is controversial to some. Why must there be the presence of fair women in Paradise and what is the similar reward for women there? Shaykh Yasir Qadhi responded to these questions by applying men and women psychology to his answer, which is in the hand of Allah’s knowledge. Allah has created men (married or unmarried) with a desire which he should control the most.

Since they are putting more effort to control the desire in the name of Allah SWT, Allah will reward them with all kinds of reward in Paradise. Men’s desire is known to public, therefore Allah made this issue open and explicit in the Quran. It does not mean that women have no such desire, therefore there will be no such reward for them. This is not publicly known, therefore Allah does not make it explicit in the Quran, since the women psychologically do not want their desire on this issue to be made public.

Of course, Allah is the All-Knowing. He knows what He creates. The inhabitants of Paradise can get what they desire - men or women. Wallahua’lam. The following is the verse about fair ladies (*huur*) in Paradise:

وَحُورٌ عِينٌ

22. And [for them are] fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes.

كَأَمْثَالِ اللُّؤْلُؤِ الْمَكْنُونِ

23. The likenesses of pearls well-protected.

جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

24. As reward for what they used to do.

In this last part of today's session, we will discuss other kinds of happiness we will be able to enjoy in Paradise, apart from the ambient, food and drinks, as well as companions. In the following verses, Allah mentions about a blissful compensation for the irritating and intimidating moments we would have had in this temporary world.

Following are the verses:

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْتِيَمًا

25. *They will not hear therein ill speech or commission of sin -*

إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا

26. *Only a saying: "Peace, peace."*

InshaAllah, we will be granted *Jannah* as *Assabikun* and we will enjoy the blissfulness of Paradise, together with the other elites. Aameen.

May Allah SWT forgive our shortcomings as well as our parents' shortcomings. With that we end our today's session.

j. The Rewards for the *Ashabul Yamin* (Verses 27-40)

Praises be to Allah, Lord of the universe. Only due to him we are able to continue with our tazkirah sessions. First of all, in today's session, InshaAllah, we are going to discuss the important characteristics of those called *Ashabul Yamin*, the men and women who are given their record book through the right hand, hence giving the hint that they have gotten the ticket to Paradise, as opposed to those who are given their record books through the left hand, the *Ashabul Shimal*.

Secondly, we will InshaAllah discuss the illustration of the rewards in Paradise; things such as gardens and running streams. We should inform ourselves on what Ibn Abbas RA advised us when it comes to illustrations of the Paradise or the Unseen World in general, in which the information revealed to us in the Quran is limited to our understanding, since the real thing is inconceivable to our minds. Simply speaking, the real illustration of Paradise is beyond our comprehension. The message here is that we can only understand the place value of the idea of the Unseen World, such as the Paradise, as we try to navigate ourselves towards the meaning and context of things in the Unseen World.

Thirdly, in today's session, we want to relate our discussion on Surah Al-Waqi'ah with the somewhat parallel aspects of Surah Ar-Rahman, so that we can have a better understanding on what people mean when they say that Surah Al-Waqi'ah is the mirror-image of Surah Ar-Rahman. Wallahua'lam. Let us now have a look at the first verse for today, which is verse 27 of Surah Al-Waqi'ah.

The verse is as follows:

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ

27. *The Companions of the Right - what are the Companions of the Right?*

Let us remind ourselves again on the 3 groups which Allah SWT mentioned in this Surah, *Ashabul Yamin*, *Ashabul Shimal* and *Assabikun*. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan mentioned that the People of the Right is a general concept referring to those who do good deeds and have *taqwa* to Allah SWT and follow the footsteps of Rasulullah SAW. The word "Maa" in this verse brings our focus to an idea which explains the unique characteristics of the People of the Right, which Allah SWT explains in terms of the types of rewards they will get in Paradise. We have already mentioned that the People of the Right originally means those who will be given their record books through the right hand. Although in our current world they might live together with the *Ashabul Shimal*, during the Day of Reckoning, they will be separated completely from them and will be put in Allah's shade.

Let us have a look at the types of rewards which will be given to the People of the Right, which is mentioned in the following verses:

فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ

28. [They will be] among lote trees with thorns removed

وَوَطْحٍ مُنْضُودٍ

29. And [banana] trees layered [with fruit]

وَوَظِلٍّ مَمْدُودٍ

30. And shade extended

وَوَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ

31. And water poured out

وَوَفَاكِهِةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ

32. And fruit, abundant [and varied],

لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ

33. Neither limited [to season] nor forbidden,

Perhaps, it is quite common for us to come across the idea of Paradise; full of trees with fruits, as well as water, besides other things. Such idea of Paradise has been criticised by those who are against the teaching of Islam. As a matter of fact, some even claim that such concept of Paradise is particularistic to certain types of society. This means to say that if you do not have these things (rewards) in your society, you tend to form a strong desire to get ahold of it.

They claimed that societies which are abundant with these things (such as fruit trees and rivers) will have no such desire for this type of Paradise. Na'uzubillahi min zalik. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi explained that how such claims are superficial. He invited us to think about the way billionaires think of their houses. All rich and wealthy people have the desire of not only having a gigantic house, but also a house with a massive garden, with trees and running water such as streams.



It is in human nature that Allah SWT created such desire, regardless of which society we are a part of. Allah SWT is The All-Knowing. In the last part of verse 33, Allah SWT mentions about forbidden fruits, and this should remind us of the ubiquitous verses in the Quran which informs Adam and Hawa to not get close to the tree with the forbidden fruit so that they will not be tempted to eat it. That was a part of the story of the beginning of the world, and in the story of the end of the world, it is mentioned that there are no longer fruits which are forbidden. Surah Al-Baqarah verse 35 is amongst the examples of the verses which informs Adam AS to not get near the particular tree.

The verse is as follows:

وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers." (Al-Baqarah: 35)

The following few verses are the illustrations of the Paradise, in which the People of the Right will be granted due to their good deeds and taqwa to Allah SWT.

The verses are as follows:

وَفُرُشٍ مَرْفُوعَةٍ

34. *And [upon] beds raised high.*

إِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَاهُنَّ إِنثَاءً

35. Indeed, we have produced the women of Paradise in a [new] creation

فَجَعَلْنَاهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا

36. And made them virgins,

عُرُبًا أَتْرَابًا

37. Devoted [to their husbands] and of equal age,

لِلْأَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ

38. For the Companions of the Right [who are]

We have discussed in detail about the idea of spouses in the Paradise in our previous session as we discussed about the concept of *Huur* (fair ladies) in the verse “*Wa huurun ‘in*”. It would sound repetitive if we are to detail the controversial claims on this subject yet again. Suffice to say that it is a type of reward for the People of the Right when they make strong efforts to control their desire in this world, to make sure they would not fall prey to such temptations manipulated by the demonic energies of Shaytan. What will be the reward for women? We have also discussed this issue in the previous session. Wallahua’lam.

In verse 37, it is mentioned “Devoted and of equal age”. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan also referred to the concept of equal intellectuality and not only equal age, implying that the People of the Right will be granted with a spouse that can understand each other better, and not the type of spouses which like to complain and accuse amongst each other, lacking IQ. Before we move to the last few verses which we are going to discuss in this session, let us first talk about how the discussion on the *Assabikun*, *Ashabul Yamin* and the *Ashabul Shimal*, as well as other aspects of this surah mirrors the image of the contents of Surah Ar-Rahman.

While this surah (Surah Al-Waqi’ah), Allah SWT discussed the group of selected elites first, followed by the lesser categorised groups, in Surah Ar-Rahman, Allah SWT discussed the types of punishments which will be faced by the wretched group or the People of the Left first. The only difference about the story of Paradise in Surah Al-Waqi’ah as opposed to Surah Ar-Rahman is that there is no discussion on the type of Paradise belonging to the other species (Jinns) in Surah Al-Waqi’ah. The rest are quite similar in terms of rewards for the *Assabikun* and *Ashabul Yamin*.

In our next session, we will look at how the types of punishments are for those of the left (*Ashabul Shimal*). However, before that, let us look at the last part of the verses concerning the People of the Right, which is as follows:

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ

39. A company of the former peoples

وَأَثَلَةٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ

40. And a company of the later peoples.

These 2 verses tell us that the People of the Right are big in number, not only during Rasulullah SAW's time, but also during our time. We should notice that when Allah discussed about the *Assabikun*, Allah SWT mentioned that they are big in number during the Prophet's time, but small in number in the later times (our time), which clearly implies that the *Assabikun* is a special type of group limited only to certain people, unlike the *Ashabul Yamin*. May Allah SWT bless us like those of the selected categories, the *Assabikun*, or at least the *Ashabul Yamin*. Aameen. With that, we end today's session.

k. The Punishments for the *Ashabul Shimal* (Verses 41-56)

Thanks, and praises be to Allah SWT for guiding us to the straight path. In today's session, we will get ourselves focused on the third category of people mentioned in Surah Al-Waqi'ah, which is the *Ashabul Shimal*, or the People of the Left. In general, InshaAllah, we will look at 3 things. First, the meaning of *Ashabul Shimal* as opposed to the People of the Right and the Forerunners (*Assabikun*). Secondly, we will look at the types of persecution and punishments which will be put onto this group. Thirdly, we want to have some ideas on how Allah described the different types of punishments for the People of the Left in this surah, as well as in Surah Ar-Rahman.

Before moving further into the discussion, let us remind ourselves on what Ibn Abbas said concerning the Unseen World, such as Paradise and Hellfire. According to him, the actual situation of the Unseen World is not known to the humankind. It is simply beyond what we can comprehend. We were told about the unseen world so that we can get a hint of it, be it the scary nature of Hellfire or the blissful nature of the Paradise. Wallahua'lam.

Let us begin the discussion on the verses for today by having a look at the first verse of the day, which is verse 41 of Surah Al-Waqi'ah.

The verse is as follows:

وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ

41. And the Companions of the Left - what are the Companions of the Left?

So, what are the Companions of the Left? If the Companions of the Right essentially mean those who Allah SWT will give the record book through the right hand, the companion of the left is basically those who will receive their record books through the left hand. Those who will be given the record book through the left hand are those who reject and are ungrateful to Allah SWT and refuses to follow the footsteps of Rasulullah SAW. Individuals such as Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab, al-'As ibn Wa'il and many others from the Prophet SAW's time are the clear examples of the People of the Left.

By the way, like the *Ashabul Yamin*, the *Ashabul Shimal* is also a concept which explains the general group of people who are ungrateful and reject Allah SWT. We will also look at the more specific categories, such as liars (*Kazibun*) and astrayed (*Dhaallin*) in some of the verses in Surah Al-Waqi'ah later onwards. In short, the People of the Left are the wretched people who are rejected by Allah SWT.

Now we shall turn our discussion to the types of punishments which the wretched will suffer, which are mentioned in the following verses:

فِي سَمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ

42. [They will be] in scorching fire and scalding water.

وَوَظِلٍّ مِنْ يَحْمُومٍ

43. And a shade of black smoke.

لَا بَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ

44. Neither cool nor beneficial.

For us, perhaps such imagination of the situation mentioned in these verses might carry little effect, simply because we don't really understand the actual magnitude meant in the words. Even those who learn Arabic find it difficult to get the intended meaning, until and unless they can feel the desert life.

The next verses will go into more detail on who are these people who will be given their record books through the left hand. According to the verse, The People of the Left are also those who are luxurious in spending their wealth, without considering those who are in need.

The verses which says so are as follows:

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ

45. Indeed they were, before that, indulging in affluence,

وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْجَنَّتِ الْعَظِيمِ

46. And they used to persist in the great violation,

The 2 verses above should give us some idea on who are the People of the Left, which are those who live luxurious and commit violations against Allah SWT's law.



We obviously believe that Allah SWT will resurrect all of mankind. However, not only do the People of the Left reject this truth, but they are also sarcastic on this idea of being resurrected in the World After. The following verses show how these people are arrogant, sceptical and sarcastic about resurrection.

وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَأَنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ

47. *And they used to say, "When we die and become dust and bones, are we indeed to be resurrected?"*

أَوِ آبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ

48. *And our forefathers [as well]?"*

Allah SWT mentioned such arrogant character of those of the left in many parts of the Quran, such as in Surah Yasin and Surah As-Sajdah. Verse 10 of Surah As-Sajdah informs us of such sarcasm and scepticism of the People of the Left.

The verse is as follows:

وَقَالُوا إِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَأَنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَافِرُونَ

And they say, "When we are lost within the earth, will we indeed be [recreated] in a new creation?" Rather, they are, in [the matter of] the meeting with their Lord, disbelievers.

One important repetitive message in the Quran, especially in verses revealed during the Meccan period, is about the Resurrection Day, in which we are told that the Musyrikun Quraysh are the perfect examples of humankind whose head and heart are so stubborn to acknowledge the truth of the Resurrection Day.

We will InshaAllah discuss this issue in more detail when we discuss following verses in Surah Al-Waqi'ah. Rasulullah SAW was told to inform the Musyrikun, as well as all of mankind that all the former people and the later people will be resurrected and gathered in the Judgement Day. The following 2 verses explicitly mention on this occurrence:

قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ

49. Say, [O Muhammad], "Indeed, the former and the later peoples

لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَىٰ مِيقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُومٍ

50. Are to be gathered together for the appointment of a known Day."

So far, we have only discussed about the characters of the *Ashabul Shimal* in general, and the types of punishments which they will suffer, in general as well. The following verses mention 2 types of the people who are of the *Ashabul Shimal*. In the following verses, we will also be given clearer information about the types of punishments and persecutions which those who are liars and those who are astray will suffer.

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيْهَا الضَّالُّونَ الْمُكَذِّبُونَ

51. Then indeed you, O those astray [who are] deniers,

لَا يَأْكُلُونَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِنْ زَقُّومٍ

52. Will be eating from trees of zaqqum

فَمَا لِنُونَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُونَ

53. And filling with it your bellies

فَشَارِبُونَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ

54. And drinking on top of it from scalding water

فَشَارِبُونَ شُرْبَ الْهَيْمِ

55. And will drink as the drinking of thirsty camels.

هَذَا نُزِّلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ

56. *That is their accommodation on the Day of Recompense.*

There is an information on the type which can be found in Hellfire which will be eaten for those who are astray and lie, which is *Zaqqum*. We also know that there are names of fruits in Jannah, such as *Rumman*. While such information is useful for us, we should remind ourselves on what Ibn Abbas RA said about the actual situation, both in Paradise as well as the Hellfire, in which they are completely different from what we imagine and understand. We should also inform here that the People of the Left will not only be drinking boiling hot water, which is obviously very tormenting, they will also drink it as if they are camels thirsty for water. May Allah SWT protect us from such tormenting punishments.

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, when mentioning about verse 56 of Surah Al-Waqi'ah, explained that all the suffering mentioned here is only the beginning of the first long punishment which will be suffered by those of the left. InshaAllah, before we end today's session take a glimpse at how Allah SWT, in Surah Ar-Rahman, mentioned the types of persecutions or punishments suffered by those who are ungrateful and reject Allah SWT's Message of Truth.

The verse is as follows:

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ

The criminals will be known by their marks, and they will be seized by the forelocks and the feet. (Ar-Rahman: 41)

يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آتٍ

They will go around between it and scalding water, heated [to the utmost degree]. (Ar-Rahman: 44)

May Allah SWT protect us and our family from such horrible punishments, and may Allah SWT grant us *Jannah* without accounting (*hisab*). With that, we end today's session.

I. There is No Power but Allah SWT (Verses 57-74)

InshaAllah, in today's session, we will discuss how Allah SWT not only teaches us, but at the same time challenges us if we are truly believers. We are going to discuss where Allah SWT, in four contexts have asked us and at the same time challenged us to realize ourselves that we are nothing without Him and we are no more than slaves. We should also inform ourselves that like in Surah Ar-Rahman, in Surah Al-Waqi'ah, there is also a form of rhetorical phrase that Allah SWT used repeatedly to challenge us. In Surah ar-Rahman, we know Allah SWT has mentioned:

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

So, which of the favors of your Lord would you deny?

In Surah Al-Waqi'ah, Allah SWT used a similar kind of word to make us understand what we should do as slaves. InshaAllah we will begin with the first few verses where Allah SWT teaches us how to be obedient.

The verses are as follows:

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ

57. We have created you, so why do you not believe?

أَفَرَأَيْتُم مَّا تُمْنُونَ

58. Have you seen that which you emit?

أَأَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ

59. Is it you who creates it, or are We the Creator?

Allah SWT begins by informing us of what is already obvious, that is, He is The Creator and we are the created. However, the question is "why?". Why is it that there exists the People of the Left who are ungrateful, reject Allah SWT's message of truth and refuse to follow the steps of Rasulullah SAW? Not only do we know that we are created by Him, we also know that we will die, and we'll be resurrected to meet Him. Allah SWT ends this part of the lesson and challenge us with a kind of rhetorical phrase by saying "Is it you who creates it or are We the Creator?".

Before we continue to discuss how Allah SWT continues to mention another three messages, such as the importance of having strong knowledge on theology (*tauhid*), let us be clear that Allah SWT started by saying us, the humans before mentioning other

creations such as plants, water, as well as fire and other creations. This message is important, because it is within the human nature to believe or have longing to know who created them. By mentioning this part of human creation as the first message, we should wake up and continue to see that even the other creations are within Allah SWT's command.

The next verse is as follows: -

نَحْنُ قَدَّرْنَا بَيْنَكُمُ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ

60. *We have decreed death among you, and We are not to be outdone*

Not only has Allah SWT created us, it is Allah SWT Who has predestined our lives in terms of our lifespan, provision, etc. That is to say that if Allah SWT has decided for us to live up to 63 years, we will and have to live for that long. Allah SWT also mentioned that none of Allah SWT's plans will be outdone by us, through whatever form of strategy or technology. The following verse is not only interesting, but also to an extent, philosophical. Let us look at the verse and try to explain some details on it: -

عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَالَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

61. *In that We will change your likenesses and produce you in that [form] which you do not know.*

This part of the verse mentions how are we going to be like in the next life. Allah SWT uses the word "أَمْثَالَكُمْ". Ulama and philosophers have explained something interesting about us in the World After once we are resurrected. In one of the discussions, the ulama have made it clear that we are not going to have our present bodies. Although it is true that we will continue with our *ruh* or the same spirit in the World After. We may be familiar with stories of an old woman meeting Rasulullah SAW asking about her possible place in the *akhirah*, either in *Jannah* or *Jahannam*.

Rasulullah SAW was said to have mentioned that no old lady will be in *Jannah*. Of course, the old lady who met Rasulullah SAW was saddened by this, but Rasulullah SAW later explained that you will be young in *Jannah*, implying that we are not going to be resurrected with our present bodies.

Philosophers of the past such as Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd were caught in a long debate regarding such an issue. It was Ibn Sina that said that there is no way that our body will be resurrected. This initially sparked controversy, and al-Ghazali explained many verses in the Quran mentioning about physical resurrection. The later philosopher, Ibn Rushd further explained this issue by saying that we will have a kind of bodily

experience in the World After. Let us mention how Allah SWT in Surah Al-Kahf mentioned that we will be resurrected with our physical bodies.

The verse is as follows: -

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاَهُمْ فَلَمْ نُعَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

And [warn of] the Day when We will remove the mountains and you will see the earth prominent, and We will gather them and not leave behind from them anyone.

May Allah SWT guide us so that we can be resurrected not only among the People of the Right, but also among the *Assabikun* (Forerunners). Let us look at the next verse: -

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

62. And you have already known the first creation, so will you not remember?

The word “first creation” in this verse refers to 2 different situations of creation. Some ulamas refer the verse as our creation from our mother’s womb, while some other ulamas refer the first creation as before mankind was created in this physical world. In that world was when we admitted ourselves as the slaves, while Allah SWT is our Master. Let us now look at another point concerning Allah SWT’s way of teaching and challenging us regarding the way we sow seeds and the way we think we grow it.

The verse is as follows:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَحْرُثُونَ

63. And have you seen that [seed] which you sow?

InshaAllah, we will look at other verses which Allah SWT has taught and challenged us on how we should by right have a strong faith that nothing can exist in this world without Allah SWT’s power. The following verse talks about seeds and plants.



The verse is as follows: -

أَأَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ

64. Is it you who makes it grow, or are We the grower?

لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطَامًا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ

65. If We willed, We could make it [dry] debris, and you would remain in wonder,

إِنَّا لَمُغْرَمُونَ

66. [Saying], "Indeed, we are [now] in debt;

The verse informs us that we should not take things for granted, thinking that we are responsible for growing the plant. Not only has Allah SWT through His Majesty, influenced every movement of the creation, if Allah SWT wanted to destroy it, none of us can do anything. As we mentioned earlier, like in Surah ar-Rahman, Allah SWT has inserted rhetorical devices to challenge us. The verse that says, "Is it you who creates it, or are We the Creator?" is the phrase that asks us to think deeply about Allah SWT as The Rabb and we as slaves.

The next verse tells us of the further realization that they have lost everything that they have, submitting to the will of Allah SWT.

بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ

67. *Rather, we have been deprived."*

We have another 2 aspects which Allah SWT teaches, and at the same time, challenges us on, which are about the creation and use of water and fire. We should look at the rhetorical devices Allah SWT used to teach and challenge us. The following verses are about the creation of water, which we humans drink:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ

68. *And have you seen the water that you drink?*

أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنزِلُونَ

69. *Is it you who brought it down from the clouds, or is it We who bring it down?*

لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ

70. *If We willed, We could make it bitter, so why are you not grateful?*

The verse should teach us how as we want to take a sip of water, we should always remind ourselves that Allah SWT gave us the ability to drink the water. We should also further enhance our aqidah by not thinking that if we put sugar, the sugar is not what makes the water sweet, because Allah SWT can make the sugar bitter, however and whenever He wishes. Let us now take a look at the verses which talk about fire.

The verse is as follows:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ

71. *And have you seen the fire that you ignite?*

أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنشِئُونَ

72. *Is it you who produced its tree, or are We the producer?*

نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكَرَةً وَمَتَاعًا لِلْمُقْوِينَ

73. *We have made it a reminder and provision for the travelers,*

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

74. *So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great.*

All that Allah wants us to admit is that we are slaves. In fact, the last verse clearly informs us that we should enslave ourselves to Him, The Most Great. The fire which we use for

multiple purposes, such as how the Bedouin used as signals, is not under our power nor control. We should bury deep in our hearts that there is no power but Allah SWT. With that, we end today's session.

m. Al-Quran and the Setting of the Stars (Verses 75-81)

In today's session, we will discuss how Allah SWT specifically highlighted the uniqueness of the Quran as one of His gifts to the humankind. In previous sessions, we have discussed how Allah SWT directly influenced or determined 4 of His blessings to the humankind; the human creation itself, the growth of plants, the water which we drink, as well as the fire we use on a daily basis such as to cook. We are going to divide today's session into 3 parts. One, the way Allah SWT took an oath to show the uniqueness of the Quran Two, the uniqueness of the Quran itself. Three, the idiocy of those who refuse to follow the message of the Quran.

Let us now have a look at verses 75 and 76 of Surah Al-Waqi'ah to learn how Allah SWT took an oath by the setting of the stars on the nobility of the Quran.

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ

75. Then I swear by the setting of the stars,

وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ

76. And indeed, it is an oath - if you could know - [most] great.

إِنَّهُ لَقُرْآنٌ كَرِيمٌ

77. Indeed, it is a noble Qur'an

فِي كِتَابٍ مَكْنُونٍ

78. In a Register well-protected;

Let us understand the concept of a swear or oath (*Qasam*), which is quite ubiquitous in the Quran. There are two types of *Qasam*, one called *al-muqasam bihi*, oath over an object, and *al-muqasam alayhi*, oath about the subject. The subject that Allah highlighted to us here is the uniqueness of the Quran, as mentioned in verses 77 and 78, while the object is the setting of the stars. The object and subject being oathed must be connected. "What is the connection between the setting of the stars and the uniqueness of the Quran?", one may ask. Astronomically, people use the setting of stars for guidance. At night, the only tool the people in the desert during those times used to guide themselves was the setting of the stars.

Allah SWT made *Qasam* twice to inform us on the great importance of the Quran as our guide. We should use the Quran as guidance, very much like how we use the GPS as a guide to go to destinations. GPS works just like the setting of the stars. Based on this verse, and according to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan as well, this is the only place in the

Quran where Allah SWT highlighted the uniqueness of the Quran through *Qasam*. Therefore, we must and should be very close to the Quran, much closer than how we are with our handphones and gadgets. We must have it beside our bed, and recite it when we wake up, instead of reading messages in our phone.

Surah Al-Waqi'ah was revealed in the Middle Meccan period. However, there are 2 versions of the *Asbabul Nuzul* for specific verses, which are verses 75-82. It is said that Ibn Abbas RA, as compiled by Imam Muslim, said that there was an occasion when it was raining at night. The next morning, the Prophet SAW said that in that morning, there were people who woke up grateful to Allah SWT, and there were also those who woke up ungrateful. The Prophet continued saying that someone woke up saying that the rain was a blessing from Allah SWT, while another woke up saying the that the setting of the stars was right.

In another narration, it is said that al-Hatim referred these verses to the Tabuk Expedition in 9H, in which the Muslim army was heading to a certain destination. At that moment, they had no water supply to drink. The army told the Prophet about the lack of supply, then the Prophet SAW performed a 2 rakaat prayer. As soon as he prayed, rain started falling, and a sahabah said that the rain fell because of the Prophet SAW's prayer. An Ansari replied that it was because of the setting of the stars, etc. In both stories, the setting of the stars was mentioned, hence relating to verse 75 of this surah. Let us now move to the verses which show the uniqueness of the Quran, which are as follows:

لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ

79. None touch it except the purified.

تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

80. [It is] a revelation from the Lord of the worlds.

We might have been informed before since we were kids that we are not allowed to touch the Quran without performing *wudhu'* (ablution) first. Some ulamas took the phrase "none touch it except the purified" in verse 79 as no one should touch the Quran except if they have performed ablution. However, upon close examination, majority of ulamas, including Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, mentioned that the verse suggests that the Quran referred to here is so high that only the angels can touch it. The Quran is unique not because only the purified can touch it, but it is also a completely different type of book, compared to the kitab of the previous prophets. We know that all prophets were given *mukjizat*, such as the miracle cane of Prophet Moses AS, and the ability to cure and to give life of Prophet Jesus AS. Those prophets were given books (*Taurat* and *Injil*) respectively. The Quran is

unique not only because the Quran contains the message of truth, but the Quran itself is also a *mukjizat* for Prophet Muhammad SAW.

It is through the Quran that Allah SWT talks to us, and by reciting the Quran, we can talk to Allah SWT. We should be aware that everytime we perform *solah*, we are basically talking to Allah SWT. Surah Al-Fatihah is a good example to show that we are actually talking to Allah while performing *solah*. Let us look at the following verses of Surah Al-Fatihah:

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

It is You we worship and You we ask for help.

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us to the straight path - (Al-Fatihah: 5-6)

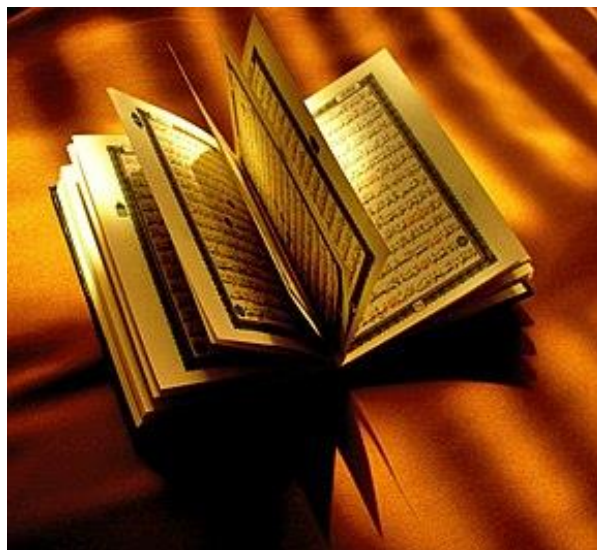
Before we get to the last verse for today's session, let's go back to verse 80. In this verse, the word "*tanzil*" should be differentiated from the word "*anzil*" or "*anzala*". When the word "*tanzil*" is used, it means that something is sent down and revealed batch by batch. Therefore, the word refers to the revelation of the Quran, which was sent batch by batch. When the word "*anzalna*" is used, it refers to the whole thing or the whole kitab being sent down. This might be confusing to us. However, if we understand the first verse of Surah Al-Qadr, the confusion should dissipate.

The first verse of Surah Al-Qadr is as follows:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ

Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during the Night of Decree.

In this verse, Allah SWT said that the whole kitab of the Quran was sent down during the Night of Power, which happens during Ramadhan.



Speaking of the Night of Power, we should grab the opportunity to perform ibadah when the Night of Power comes, as the benefit we get from it is equal to 1000 months (83 years) of ibadah.

These are some of the uniqueness of the Quran. However, those who have no basic knowledge on the Quran or the Arabic language, and only wants to be critical and sceptical about the authenticity of the Quran, they tend to look at the problems of the Quran, both in its meaning as well as its presentation. Na'uzubillahi min zalik. There are cases when these people read the first part of Surah Al-Baqarah, they discovered the phrase "this is a book" which they understood as a book, written by someone, instead of a revelation. To them, if it was sent down through revelation, it must have been sent down as a message, not as a book. After all, they know that as a book, the Quran only existed during Abu Bakr's time, and was later standardised during Uthman's time. However, if we really understand Arabic grammar, the first part of Surah Al-Baqarah refers "the book" as the kitab in the *Luh Mahfuz* which Allah sends down to the Baitul Izzah every Ramadhan. Below are the verses of Surah Al-Baqarah we are referring to:

الم

Alif, Lam, Meem.

ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ

This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah
– (Al-Baqarah: 1-2)

Note that the phrase "*zalikal kitab*" is used instead of "*haazal kitab*", the former used to refer to something far, while the latter is used to refer to something near. InshaAllah, as

we have discussed some of the uniqueness of the Quran, we shall now move on to the last verse for today's session.

أَفَبِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنْتُمْ مُذْهَبُونَ

81. Then is it to this statement that you are indifferent

This verse informs us how stubborn, and at the same time, in loss, those who reject the Quran or are indifferent to it are. Allah SWT had informed us that not only did he give us life and brought to existence other creations for us such as plants, water, and fire, which we have discussed in the previous session, but Allah SWT had also given us the Quran. We are in loss, and in many ways, stupid if we only want to take everything material which Allah SWT gives to us, but we do not want to take everything spiritually from Allah SWT. May Allah guide us to the straight path. With that, we end today's discussion. May Allah SWT forgive our shortcomings and the shortcomings our parents may have committed.

n. Save Yourself If You Can (Verses 82-96)

With Allah SWT's rahmah, we are now entering the last part or session of this whole tazkirah series. Surah Al-Waqi'ah should alert us on many things, from the coming of the Resurrection Day to the 3 different types of people (*Assabikun, Ashabul Yamin, Ashabul Shimal*) with different types of blessings and punishments, discussion on believing that Allah is the only existing power, to what we are going to discuss today; Allah SWT challenging us to save ourselves by ourselves if we think that we do not need Allah's guide.

In today's session, we are going to divide our discussion into 3 parts; first on the summary about those who deny Allah SWT's gifts to them, second on the case of the 2 people at the pangs of death, and last but not least on the different groups of mankind and the way they will be rewarded and punished. Let us have a look at the first verse of the day, which is verse 82 of Surah Al-Waqi'ah.

The verse is as follows:

وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ تُكذِّبُونَ

82. And make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]?

The provision in Surah Al-Waqi'ah, which we have discussed about before, is many. Interestingly, everytime Allah SWT talks about the provision, Allah teaches us to understand that Allah SWT is the One who gives the provisions. Allah SWT was the One Who created us, grow plants, send down water, bring fire to existence, etc. In the previous session, Allah SWT talked about a specific gift, the Quran, which Allah SWT gave to us as guidance in this world. Only a liar will not be able to acknowledge Allah SWT's power and mercy. The question is, for those who do not believe in Allah SWT and His power, will they still continue lying about the existence of Allah SWT when they are in great danger, let alone when they are in the pangs of death? Allah SWT mentioned about this in the following verses of Surah Al-Waqi'ah:

فَلَوْلَا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْحُلُقُومَ

83. Then why, when the soul at death reaches the throat

وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ

84. And you are at that time looking on -

وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

85. And Our angels are nearer to him than you, but you do not see -

The verses above talk about the situation of when we are about to die, when our soul is about to escape through our throat (*halqum*). We will be surrounded by our family members, and also angels, except that we are not able to see the angels. At this moment, when we know that we can no longer use our energy to move, or even to think, we begin to realise how small we are in this world. A rat would run to every direction it can to save itself. But when it knows that there is no chance of escaping, we can see how it will submit itself as if prostrating to us.



Those who lie, thinking about their own power and wealth, will begin to realise that they have to submit themselves when there is no longer a way for them to escape. In the next 2 verses, Allah SWT challenges those who deny His power (*tukazzibun*), saying that if they do not need Allah's power and that they are strong enough, why don't they try to bring back their souls into their body. Of course, they are not able to do it. At this point, trying would just be meaningless

The 2 verses are as follows:

فَلَوْلَا إِن كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ

86. *Then why do you not, if you are not to be recompensed,*

تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

87. *Bring it back, if you should be truthful?*

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan said the phrase “then why do you not” not only applies for the first point, which is to be recompensed, but also to the phrase in the next verse “bring it back”, which means to bring back their own lives. Generally, Allah challenges those who

are ungrateful and reject Allah SWT, and refuses to follow the footsteps of Rasulullah SAW and says that all this while they have been stubborn to Allah SWT. Now, they can't even bring their own lives back when Allah SWT has already decided that they have to go. While the liars' fates are mentioned in this verse through Allah SWT's provoking statement, for the Mu'minin who wants to get closer to Allah, Allah SWT will give good news when they are at the point of death. The verses which mention this case is as follows:

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

88. And if the deceased was of those brought near to Allah,

فِرْوٰحٍ وَرِيْحَانٍ وَجَنَّٰتٍ نَّعِيْمٍ

89. Then [for him is] rest and bounty and a garden of pleasure.

InshaAllah, we will be amongst the people who Allah SWT will give an easy death to, not only surrounded by family members, but also by angels who will make *du'a* for us to enter Jannah. The verse explicitly mentions that those who are good in Iman will get Allah SWT's mercy and blessings, as they will be brought to Jannah. May we and our family be amongst those people. In the next verses, Allah SWT goes through on the place for the *Ashabul Yamin*.

The verses are as follows:

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ

90. And if he was of the Companions of the Right,

فَسَلَامٌ لَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ

91. Then [the angels will say], "Peace for you; [you are] from the Companions of the Right."

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, when discussing about verse 91 of this surah, explained about how we will also get *salam* from Rasulullah SAW if we are amongst the people who follow his footsteps. We should remember that Surah Al-Waqi'ah teaches us a lot, not only about the *Assabikun* (the Forerunners), *Ashabul Yamin* (the People of the Right), but also the *Ashabul Shimal* (the People of the Left). The next verses are about the People of the Left who are known for lying and being astrayed.

The verses are as follows:

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكْذِبِينَ الضَّالِّينَ

92. But if he was of the deniers [who were] astray,

فَنَزَّلُ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ

93. Then [for him is] accommodation of scalding water

وَتَصْلِيَةُ جَحِيمٍ

94. And burning in Hellfire

Verses 93 and 94 mention 2 parts of an event in the Hereafter. We have discussed in one of our previous sessions that Allah SWT will give boiling water for the *Ashabul Shimal*, and they will drink it like thirsty camels. The second part of the punishment is the Hellfire itself, which they will be thrown into. Allah SWT mentioned that the People of the Left will be burning in the Hellfire. InshaAllah, we are now moving to the last verses of Surah Al-Waqi'ah. Let us have a look at the verses, which is as follows:

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ

95. Indeed, this is the true certainty,

فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ

96. So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great.

Allah mentioned that everything which has been discussed in Surah Al-Waqi'ah is not only the truth, but also a true certainty. It might sound redundant to us, but the phrase “true certainty” should definitely get the message across, both in our minds and in our hearts, so that we can be among those of the *Ashabul Yamin*, if not the *Assabikun*. Aameen. May we be raised in status to *Assabikun*. Aameen. The last verse of Surah Al-Waqi'ah reminds us to always exalt Allah SWT, and Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan said, as we perform *ruku'* in salah, that the *du'a* we perform during the *ruku'* was inspired by this verse of Surah Al-Waqi'ah.

May we be among those who always praise and exalt Allah SWT. Aameen. With that, we end today's session.

Epilogue: The Main Points of Surah Al-Mulk and Surah Al-Waqi'ah

Praise be to Allah SWT, Lord of the universe, for giving us the strength to complete our discussions on both surahs, Al-Mulk and Al-Waqi'ah in this series. In this concluding session, we only want to highlight the important points or messages which we have learned from both surahs. Let us begin with Surah Al-Mulk. The surah begins by mentioning Allah SWT's power and ends by mentioning how weak and insignificant the disbelievers are. Although the surah strongly talks about the disbelievers, it does not mean at all that we are not affected by the message, since not only do we not know of our true Iman which fluctuates constantly, we also do not know how we will be ending our lives. Of course, we want to have a good life. We should also know that we bear the responsibility of spreading the message of truth to others, including the disbelievers.

Surah Al-Mulk is divided into six parts, which is as follows: -

Part 1 talks about Allah SWT's power and gives emphasis on learning Allah SWT's creations (death and life) and the creation of The 7 Skies/Heaven (*Sab'a Samawat*). Part 2 is a long section, which is from verse 5 to verse 15. It tells us of the punishments of Hellfire and ends by discussing the blessings for those who secretly demonstrate *taqwa* to Allah SWT. This part begins by telling us to observe the phenomenon of the closest sky. Part 3 is also a long segment. It comprises of verses 16-22. It informs us on how disbelievers, or in the context of Surah Al-Mulk, the Musyrikun idolaters are threatened to be swallowed by the earth and punished by the sky. It is in this part that Allah SWT asks us to observe the phenomenon of the birds flying in flocks in the sky.

Parts 4,5 and 6 are brief. In Part 4, Allah SWT warned and mentioned us on our short lives; therefore, we should be able to discern, observe as well as learn through our hearts regarding Allah SWT's power. Part 5 tells us of the stubbornness of the believers, even to the point of questioning the existence of Hellfire or even the World After and the Resurrection Day themselves. Part 6 mentions of how weak we are as humans, especially the disbelievers, more specifically the Musyrikun Quraysh, and they would be meaningless if Allah SWT had taken the *rahmah* of water (from the Zamzam Well) from them, for it was their source of economical strength. In short, Surah Al-Mulk is a late Makkiah surah, where strong messages targeted at the Musyrikun Quraysh were given, whose stubbornness and arrogance had become too much, to the point where they boycotted and even tried to kill Rasulullah SAW.

We now turn to the conclusion of Surah Al-Waqi'ah. This surah tells in general about the fate of three types of people. The *Assabikun* (The Forerunners), the *Ashabul Yamin* (People of the Right, which Allah SWT give to them their record book with their right hand), and the *Ashabul Shimal* (People of the Left, which Allah SWT give their record book

through their left hand). The former will be granted *Jannah* while the latter will be thrown into *Jahannam*. This surah comprises of 7 parts: -

In Part 1, Allah SWT talks about the Day, that is the End, together with the three categories of people mentioned earlier. Part 2 mentions the reward for the *Assabikun*, which is the reward of *Jannah*. We should remind ourselves that any imaginary illustrations of *Jannah* should not be conceived by our mental ability, because every time we try to imagine it, we will miss it. For example, if it is stated that there will be drinks, we should not imagine the type of drinks to be that of which we prefer to be in *Jannah*. Part 3 is about the *Ashabul Yamin* and their reward. Allah SWT describes the different types of trees and fruits that they will enjoy in *Jannah*.

Part 4 is about the People of the Left or the *Ashabul Shimal* and the form of punishments and persecutions that they will face in *Jahannam*. There are subcategories of them, the *ad-Dhallin*, those who are strayed from the path, and the *al-Kazzibun*, those who are liars. Part 5 focuses on Allah SWT's creations in this world, which we are one of them. Therefore, we should understand that we are nothing without Allah SWT. In fact, everything that we do in this world will not be materialized without Allah SWT's influence and intervention. Allah SWT describes the creation of humans, plants, water and fire. It is in this surah that the rhetorical devices similar to that of Surah Ar-Rahman (*Fabi'ayyi ala irabbikuma tukazziban*) also exists. Part 6 talks about the importance of the Quran and the benefits of us always being with the Quran and always reciting as well as learning it. Finally, the last part, Part 7 tells us of the different groups, including the *Ashabul Yamin* and the *Ashabul Shimal*, as well as the punishments and rewards that will be given in the World After.

We have mentioned in our prologue or introduction, that whosoever recites Surah Al-Mulk, Allah SWT will forgive them and save them from the torment of the grave. We have also mentioned that whosoever recites Surah Al-Waqi'ah, Allah SWT will give them wealth and protect them from poverty. Both benefits, the ones that happen after we die and when we are alive are those that we want, hence we should not forsake the practice and teachings taught by these surahs. We would like to record our appreciation to Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan for his continuous efforts in sharing the knowledge on the *tafseer* or meanings of the Quran. May Allah SWT give *barakah* to his family and ours as well, Aameen. With that, we shall end today's session.

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