

Tafseer Surah Al-Mulk (المالك)

Notes on Nouman Ali Khan's Concise Commentary of the Qur'an
(Additional Sources Used as Well)

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Introduction

- I. This *surah* was revealed in the Meccan period [Baghawi]
- II. According to *al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*, this chapter is called *al-Mulk* (authority) because:
 - A. Allah opens it with the fact that all authority is in His Hands and that He has power over everything
 - B. To remind that affairs cannot be except for one who has complete authority, which in this case is Allah because He has absolute disposition [in all matters]
- III. The purpose of the chapter is to show the perfection of Allah's authority and power, awakening for of Him, and warning of His punishment [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

Tafseer of the Verses

1. **Blessed is the One in Whose Hands rests all authority. And He is Most Capable of everything**
 - a. This is a statement of Allah's dominion, ownership, and authority over everything. It is the starting point of faith because we believe Allah has complete control over all things
 - i. There is an axiom which states that power corrupts, however, when it comes to Allah, it is not like that, rather, He is blessed
 - ii. There is nothing that Allah is unable to do [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
 - b. Meaning of 'blessed (*barakah*)' in Arabic:
 - i. It means when there is more good than expected in something
 - ii. Allah has the power to bring good out of things like nobody else
2. **'He is the One' Who created death and life in order to test which of you is best in deeds. And He is the Almighty, All-Forgiving**
 - a. Death is mentioned first because we begin from non-existence, which is a type of death
 - b. Many people are given the same opportunities but some take advantage of them while others do not
 - i. This life is a test for us all to see which of us will do the best [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
 1. Some said it means 'the best' in terms of to see who is most obedient to Allah [Baghawi]
 - c. Deeds are not accepted unless they are done sincerely for the sake of Allah and in accordance to the *sunnah* of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) [Baghawi]

- d. Allah is Almighty and nothing can overpower Him. He is forgiving of sins to those who turn back to Him in repentance [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
- 3. 'He is the One' Who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the Most Compassionate (ar-Rahmaan). So look again: do you see any flaws?**
- Allah constructed the seven heavens one above the other in layers without them touching one another [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
 - Allah's Name of *al-Rahmaan* is the only one that comes in the Qur'an as a substitute for the name 'Allah.' No other of Allah's Names come as a standalone in this way
 - Meaning we will only find consistency and creativity in His creation and no flaws. We will neither find any crack, blemish, or tear in the sky
- 4. Then look again and again—your sight will return frustrated and weary**
- Meaning your sight will return to you exhausted and you would have found no flaws in the creation of the sky
 - We take from this that we should ponder over Allah's creation because it helps us realize the power and grandeur of Allah
- 5. And indeed, We adorned the lowest heaven with 'stars like' lamps, and made them 'as missiles' for stoning 'eavesdropping' devils, for whom We have also prepared the torment of the Blaze**
- We are being told that the stars are a decoration for sky number one out of the seven. All of the technology that we have today cannot see pass the first sky because all we see are stars
 - We are also told that fiery missiles are thrown at the devils among the *Jinn* who try to eavesdrop to steal information from the angels from above and that a blazing fire has been prepared for them in the afterlife
 - There are more details discussed about the eavesdropping in Surah al-Jinn
 - It should be noted that these fiery missiles are not the stars themselves but separate as we are told in another part of the Qur'an that, "*But whoever manages to stealthily eavesdrop is 'instantly' pursued by a piercing flare*" (37:10) [Sabuni]
- 6. Those who disbelieve in their Lord will suffer the punishment of Hell. What an evil destination!**
- Meaning those who disbelieve in their Lord, whether among mankind or *jinn*, they will be punished in a blazing fire on the Day of Judgment [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer* and Sabuni]
- 7. When they are tossed into it, they will hear its roaring as it boils over**
- It is as if the Hellfire is being fed with disbelievers and it is making an ugly noise after it
 - The imagery is that of disbelievers being swallowed by Hell, which then results with a horrifying sound coming from it as it exhales [Sabuni]
 - We often see this in our homes as well when the water is boiling in a pot over the fire and we toss something in it for cooking which causes it to make a hissing sound

- a. The Hellfire is many times larger than a pot so imagine the severity of the sound! [My comment]

8. Almost bursting in anger. Every time a group is cast into it, its keepers will ask them, “Did a warner not come to you?”

- a. Meaning the Hellfire has this rage/aggression about it due to its anger against the enemies of Allah and the person being thrown into it is like a victim to an angry animal
- b. The guardians of Hellfire will interrogate those cast into it saying, “Didn’t a messenger come frightening you all about Allah’s punishment and this horrible day?!”
 - i. Their questioning is a form of rebuke and reprimand [Sabuni]
- c. The ‘warner’ can be the Messenger (pbuh) or Qur’an

9. They will reply, “Yes, a warner did come to us, but we denied and said, ‘Allah has revealed nothing. You are extremely astray.’”

- a. Meaning they will admit that a warner had indeed come but they ignored his warnings, rejected him and his message, ridiculed him, and denied that any revelation had come down from Allah
 - i. In fact, they thought the messengers to be greatly misguided from the truth [al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer]

10. And they will lament, “If only we had listened and reasoned, we would not be among the residents of the Blaze!”

- a. We learn that the first thing is to sincerely ‘listen’ to the ‘warner’ and then think it through. If they had done that, they would not have been in Hellfire
- b. Proper reasoning would have made them distinguish between truth and falsehood. They would have believed in the messengers and whatever they brought, therefore, they would have been from the people of paradise [al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer]
- c. They had their faculties of intellect and hearing, however, they did not benefit from them, instead, they used to ridicule the messengers, brag, and deny. They used to falsely accuse the messengers and believers of foolishness and insanity [Sabuni]

11. And so they will confess their sins. So away with the residents of the Blaze!

- a. When we confess our sins in this world, we get closer to Allah. This is called repentance (*tawbah*). However, if people confess their sins in the afterlife, it has no effect and does not bring them closer to Him, in fact, Allah distances Himself away from them
 - i. Their confessions in the afterlife only make them deserving of Hellfire because confession is the leader of all evidence [al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer and Sabuni]

12. Indeed, those in awe of their Lord unseen will have forgiveness and a mighty reward

- a. After mentioning the characteristics of the people of disbelief and their punishment, Allah in this verse mentions the characteristics of the people of faith and their reward [al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer]
- b. The meaning of ‘unseen’ could be two things:
 - i. They fear Allah even though they cannot see Him because they are certain of His existence
 - ii. They fear Allah in private as well and not just in public

1. Meaning they obey His commands even when nobody is watching except Allah
- c. Such people will be forgiven their sins, which means Allah saved them from their sins' evil and the punishment of Hellfire [Sa'di]
- d. The 'mighty reward' is in reference to paradise and all the perks that come along with it, such as, high palaces, *hoor al-'ayn*, servants, great kingdom, pleasures, etc. [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer* and Sa'di]

13. Whether you speak secretly or openly—He surely knows best what is 'hidden' in the heart

- a. Meaning there is nothing hidden from Him even the deep thoughts in our hearts are known to Him so how about our actions? Whether we do things openly or in secret, they are the same to Him

14. How could He not know His Own creation? For He 'alone' is the Most Subtle, All-Aware

- a. Meaning how could the One who created everything not know the secrets or even that which is more hidden than it from His own creation?! He is well Aware of the affairs of His creation [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
 - i. The level of details and precision that Allah knows about His own creation is unmatched
 - ii. Allah can see a black ant on top of a black rock in a dark night [Sabuni]

15. He is the One Who smoothed out the earth for you, so move about in its regions and eat from His provisions. And to Him is the resurrection 'of all'

- a. Meaning Allah made the earth easy for us to live on top of it. We can also easily move around on top of it from one end to another for sustenance and livelihood
- b. We are also told to eat the provisions which He has prepared for us on earth and then reminded us that we will be resurrected [in the end] for accountability and reward/punishment [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

16. Do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not cause the earth to swallow you up as it quakes violently?

- a. Meaning how do you feel so safe that Allah will not cause an earthquake to sink you into the earth as it happened with Qarun?! There is a threat for us here from the earth
 - i. Qarun was an extremely wealthy man in the time of Prophet Musa (pbuh) but was arrogant. Allah punished him by sending an earthquake that caused his house to sink on top of him into the earth. He was crushed to death
- b. We are being warned that the earth could start trembling without warning after it was stable [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
 - i. If Allah wanted, He could destroy everything in a city within seconds through an earthquake as is observed in reports after various natural disasters. These are forms of reminders for us [Sabuni]

17. Or do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not unleash upon you a storm of stones. Only then would you know how 'serious' My warning was!

- a. Now we are being warned about a threat from the sky

- b. Meaning how do you feel so safe that Allah will not cause stones from the sky to be sent down to you as was done with the people of Lut?! It is when you observe His punishment that you will realize His warning to you but it will then be too late
[*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

18. And certainly those before them denied 'as well', then how severe was My response!

- a. Meaning there were nations before these idol-worshippers of Mecca who denied, so Allah sent upon them His punishment when they persisted in their disbelief and denial. Allah's response to them was severe for their denial [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

19. Have they not seen the birds above them, spreading and folding their wings? None holds them up except the Most Compassionate. Indeed, He is All-Seeing of everything

- a. There is encouragement here to look at the birds and observe how Allah has facilitated flight for them in the air. They are able to do it whenever they want and need. It is Allah who did this for them by making their bodies and creation ready for flight. Those who deeply consider this will realize the power of Allah and that He alone deserves to be worshiped [Sa'di]
 - i. The birds swim through the air without falling as fish do through the water. It is Allah alone who made them this way [Sabuni]
- b. Allah is All-Seeing so nothing is hidden from Him [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

20. Also, which 'powerless' force will come to your help instead of the Most Compassionate? Indeed, the disbelievers are only 'lost' in delusion

- a. Allah's armies are limitless, therefore, there is no force that can prevent His punishment from taking place whenever He wants to punish someone. In the previous few verses, Allah mentioned two of His armies: the earth and the sky
 - i. Even if the whole creation got together to help someone, they would not be able to do so even in the slightest if Allah decreed to harm that person [My comment]
- b. The disbelievers are deceived and deluded by the devil [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
 - i. They are persisting in their disbelief despite knowing that nothing can help them against Allah. They are being foolish [Sa'di]

21. Or who is it that will provide for you if He withholds His provision? In fact, they persist in arrogance and aversion 'to the truth'

- a. Meaning nobody can provide you with sustenance if He withholds it from you. The disbelievers procrastinate in their stubbornness and arrogance and refrain from the truth [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
 - i. Allah could withhold provisions in numerous ways by blocking the means to them, such as, rain, air, sun, trees, fruits, etc. because they are in the Hands of Allah [Sabuni]

22. Who is 'rightly' guided: the one who crawls facedown or the one who walks upright on the Straight Path?

- a. Ibn Abbas said, "This is a parable of the one who takes the path of misguidance and another who takes the path of guidance" [Sabuni]
- b. This is summarizing those who live with a purpose and those who do not:

- i. The ones who crawl facedown are those who are only concerned about this world and live their life chasing it. They do not know where they are heading because they are not living with a purpose in life
 - 1. They walk like the blind who cannot see where they are going. Their sight and hearts are blinded [Sabuni]
- ii. The ones who walk upright on the straight path are those who follow guidance and live their life with an ultimate purpose
 - 1. They walk like those standing upright able to see where they are going [Sabuni]
- c. From these two cases, who is the one that is rightly guided and more worthy of being followed?

23. Say, 'O Prophet,' "He is the One Who brought you into being and gave you hearing, sight, and hearts. 'Yet' you hardly give any thanks"

- a. Hearing is mentioned first because we need to hear the guidance first and then see where we are going. Then we need to remain firm on it with our hearts
- b. These three specific senses were given according to Muhammad Ali Sabuni because:
 - i. Hearing: so that we may hear what benefits us
 - ii. Sight: so that we may observe the evidence of Allah's power in this universe
 - iii. Heart: this relates to the intellect so that we may ponder and reflect over the greatness of Allah
- c. The verse ends with telling us that we give little thanks for these blessings of Allah. These three senses are tools to know things and means to understanding, however, people continue to persist in their erroneous ways. Instead, the people remember Allah in times of hardship but forget Him in times of ease and prosperity

24. 'Also' say, "He is the One Who has dispersed you 'all' over the earth, and to Him you will 'all' be gathered"

- a. Allah is the one who creates unique things out of nothing. Humans take inspiration from what is already in the creation and slightly modify it. Then they erroneously think that they have created something unique
- b. The idol worshipers of Mecca are being told that Allah is the one who spread them out through the earth and not their false idols who have not created anything. They are also told that in the end, everyone will be gathered before Allah alone for accountability and reward/punishment and not before their idols, therefore, they should fear Him and worship Him alone [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

25. 'Still' they ask 'the believers', "When will this threat come to pass, if what you say is true?"

- a. Meaning those who deny and reject resurrection say this to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his companions [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
- b. The 'threat' is in reference to resurrection, reward, punishment, Day of Judgment, etc. The disbelievers said this to them out of ridicule and mockery [Sabuni]

26. Say, 'O Prophet,' "That knowledge is with Allah alone, and I am only sent with a clear warning"

- a. The exact time of the Final Hour and resurrection are known to Allah alone. The Prophet (pbuh) is only a warner sent to frighten those who disbelieve from Allah's incumbent punishment if they do not believe [Sabuni]
- b. The aspect of 'warning' is highlighted here again as was done previously in verse 8 above so that we may take heed now while still alive and save ourselves from the punishment in the afterlife

27. Then when they see the torment drawing near, the faces of the disbelievers will become gloomy, and it will be said to them, "This is what you claimed would never come"

- a. Meaning when the disbelievers see Hellfire getting closer and closer to them on the Day of Judgment, then their faces will turn terrible because they will realize what's coming to them. Then they will be told, "This is what you were asking for in the world and seeking to hasten it!"
 - i. Traces of depression, displeasure, and sorrow will display on their faces [Sabuni]

28. Say, 'O Prophet, 'Consider this: whether Allah causes me and those with me to die or shows us mercy, who will save the disbelievers from a painful punishment?'

- a. The Prophet (pbuh) is being told to tell the ignorant idol worshipers that if Allah were to cause him and the believers with him to die or have mercy on them by delaying their deaths, then who will save the disbelievers from the painful punishment?! Do they think their idols will save them from His punishment? Nobody will save them [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer* and Sabuni]
 - i. In other words, it will not help their situation in the least. They will still be in the same dilemma [My comment]

29. Say, "He is the Most Compassionate—in Him 'alone' we believe, and in Him 'alone' we trust. You will soon know who is clearly astray"

- a. The Prophet (pbuh) is being told to tell the idol worshipers that Allah, the Most Compassionate, is the one who is calling them to worship Him alone. We believe in Him and place our trust in Him for all our affairs. Inevitably, the disbelievers will know who were the ones on clear misguidance from those on the straight path [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

30. Say, "Consider this: if your water were to sink 'into the earth', then who 'else' could bring you flowing water?"

- a. The 'water' here is in reference to *zamzam* water found in Mecca, which was their main water source, so they are being told how would they bring it back if Allah were to sink it into the earth? Nobody would be able to bring it back for them except Allah alone
- b. This is a serious intimidating threat to the people of disbelief and misguidance [Sabuni]