Commentary

The Virtues of Surah Al-Mulk

Prophetic Tradition has named this Surah as Waqiyah (protector) and Munjiyah (saviour) as well. In a Tradition, the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said:

ھِیَ المانعۃ المنجیۃ تنجیہ من عذاب القبر

"It [ the Surah ] is the protector and saviour which will rescue and redeem him who recites it from the torment of the grave." [ Transmitted by Tirmidhi who has graded it as 'liasan, gharib' as quoted by Qurtubl ]

Sayyidna Ibn ` Abbas ؓ reports that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

"It is my heart's desire that Surah Al-Mulk be in every believer's heart." [ Tha` labi ]

Sayyidna Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

"Verily, there is a Surah in the Book of Allah (Qur'an) containing thirty verses that will intercede on behalf of him who recites it until he is rescued from Hell and admitted to Paradise; and it is Surah Tabarak." [ Qurtubi cites it from Tirmidhi ].

تَبَارَ‌كَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ‌ (Glorious is the One in whose hand is the Kingdom [ of the whole universe ], and He is powerful over every thing...67:1). The word Tabaraka is derived from barakah, which literally means 'to grow' or 'increase'. When it is related to Allah, it signifies 'to be highest in all respects' and it conveys a meaning similar to Allahu Akbar 'Allah is the Highest'.

بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ (in Whose hand is the Kingdom): The word Yad (hand) is attributed to Allah at many places in the Qur'an, whereas He is beyond having a body, limbs or organs. As a result, the word must, of necessity, be taken as one of the mutashabihat. We need to believe in its reality, but it is not possible for anyone to grasp its exact nature. It is improper to pursue this subject. The word Mulk (Kingdom) refers to the Kingdom of the whole universe, of the heavens and the earth and of the mortal world as well as of the Hereafter.

The verse under comment refers to four of the Divine attributes. Firstly, His existence; secondly, His comprehending all the attributes of perfection and being most Exalted; thirdly, His being the ruler of the heavens and earth; and fourthly, His having power over everything. The verses that follow are adduced as proofs of these attributes, which become clear by pondering over the creation of Allah. Therefore, the next verses refer to the various types of creation in the universe as proofs positive of the existence and Oneness of Allah and His all-encompassing knowledge and power. To begin with, reference is made to those proofs of the divine omnipotence that are available in human beings themselves who are the noblest creation in the universe. The words الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ (the One who created death and life) are meant for this purpose, (as will be explained shortly). Then, several verses (3 to 5) invite consideration to the creation of heavens to find proofs of Allah's omnipotence. Thereafter, verses 15 and 16 call our attention to the creation of the earth and its benefits. Lastly, the creatures living in the heavenly atmosphere, that is, the birds are mentioned in verse 19.

In short, the basic subject of the Surah is to prove the existence of Allah and His perfect knowledge and power by inviting consideration to the marvels of this universe. However, as a subsidiary subject, some other realities are also mentioned like punishment for unbelievers and reward for believers.

The proofs of the divine knowledge and power found in the man himself are indicated in the following two words:

تَبَـٰرَكَ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِ ٱلْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ  
  
  
Blessed is the One in Whose Hands rests all authority. And He is Most Capable of everything.  
The Clear Quran

ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ ٱلْمَوْتَ وَٱلْحَيَوٰةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۚ وَهُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْغَفُورُ  
  
  
˹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.  
The Clear Quran

ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَـٰوَٰتٍ طِبَاقًا ۖ مَّا تَرَىٰ فِى خَلْقِ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ مِن تَفَـٰوُتٍ ۖ فَٱرْجِعِ ٱلْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ  
  
  
˹He is the One˺ Who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the Most Compassionate. So look again: do you see any flaws?  
The Clear Quran

ثُمَّ ٱرْجِعِ ٱلْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ ٱلْبَصَرُ خَاسِئًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ  
  
  
Then look again and again—your sight will return frustrated and weary.  
The Clear Quran

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا ٱلسَّمَآءَ ٱلدُّنْيَا بِمَصَـٰبِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَـٰهَا رُجُومًا لِّلشَّيَـٰطِينِ ۖ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ ٱلسَّعِيرِ  
  
  
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.   
The Clear Quran

وَلِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَبِئْسَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ  
  
  
Those who disbelieve in their Lord will suffer the punishment of Hell. What an evil destination!  
The Clear Quran

إِذَآ أُلْقُوا۟ فِيهَا سَمِعُوا۟ لَهَا شَهِيقًا وَهِىَ تَفُورُ  
  
  
When they are tossed into it, they will hear its roaring as it boils over,  
The Clear Quran

تَكَادُ تَمَيَّزُ مِنَ ٱلْغَيْظِ ۖ كُلَّمَآ أُلْقِىَ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَآ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَذِيرٌ  
  
  
almost bursting in fury. Every time a group is cast into it, its keepers will ask them, “Did a warner not come to you?”  
The Clear Quran

قَالُوا۟ بَلَىٰ قَدْ جَآءَنَا نَذِيرٌ فَكَذَّبْنَا وَقُلْنَا مَا نَزَّلَ ٱللَّهُ مِن شَىْءٍ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا فِى ضَلَـٰلٍ كَبِيرٍ  
  
  
They will reply, “Yes, a warner did come to us, but we denied and said, ‘Allah has revealed nothing. You are extremely astray.’”  
The Clear Quran

وَقَالُوا۟ لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِىٓ أَصْحَـٰبِ ٱلسَّعِيرِ  
  
  
And they will lament, “If only we had listened and reasoned, we would not be among the residents of the Blaze!”  
The Clear Quran

فَٱعْتَرَفُوا۟ بِذَنۢبِهِمْ فَسُحْقًا لِّأَصْحَـٰبِ ٱلسَّعِيرِ  
  
  
And so they will confess their sins. So away with the residents of the Blaze!  
The Clear Quran

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِٱلْغَيْبِ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ  
  
  
Indeed, those in awe of their Lord without seeing Him will have forgiveness and a mighty reward.  
The Clear Quran

وَأَسِرُّوا۟ قَوْلَكُمْ أَوِ ٱجْهَرُوا۟ بِهِۦٓ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ عَلِيمٌۢ بِذَاتِ ٱلصُّدُورِ  
  
  
Whether you speak secretly or openly—He surely knows best what is ˹hidden˺ in the heart.  
The Clear Quran

أَلَا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ خَلَقَ وَهُوَ ٱللَّطِيفُ ٱلْخَبِيرُ  
  
  
How could He not know His Own creation? For He ˹alone˺ is the Most Subtle, All-Aware.  
The Clear Quran

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَٱمْشُوا۟ فِى مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا۟ مِن رِّزْقِهِۦ ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ ٱلنُّشُورُ  
  
  
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˺.  
The Clear Quran

ءَأَمِنتُم مَّن فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ أَن يَخْسِفَ بِكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ فَإِذَا هِىَ تَمُورُ  
  
  
Do you feel secure that the One Who is in heaven will not cause the earth to swallow you up as it quakes violently?  
The Clear Quran

أَمْ أَمِنتُم مَّن فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ أَن يُرْسِلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَاصِبًا ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ كَيْفَ نَذِيرِ  
  
  
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!  
The Clear Quran

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ  
  
  
And certainly those before them denied ˹as well˺, then how severe was My response!  
The Clear Quran

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا۟ إِلَى ٱلطَّيْرِ فَوْقَهُمْ صَـٰٓفَّـٰتٍ وَيَقْبِضْنَ ۚ مَا يُمْسِكُهُنَّ إِلَّا ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنُ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍۭ بَصِيرٌ  
  
  
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.  
The Clear Quran

أَمَّنْ هَـٰذَا ٱلَّذِى هُوَ جُندٌ لَّكُمْ يَنصُرُكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ ۚ إِنِ ٱلْكَـٰفِرُونَ إِلَّا فِى غُرُورٍ  
  
  
Also, which ˹powerless˺ force will come to your help instead of the Most Compassionate? Indeed, the disbelievers are only ˹lost˺ in delusion.  
The Clear Quran

أَمَّنْ هَـٰذَا ٱلَّذِى يَرْزُقُكُمْ إِنْ أَمْسَكَ رِزْقَهُۥ ۚ بَل لَّجُّوا۟ فِى عُتُوٍّ وَنُفُورٍ  
  
  
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˺.  
The Clear Quran

أَفَمَن يَمْشِى مُكِبًّا عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهِۦٓ أَهْدَىٰٓ أَمَّن يَمْشِى سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ  
  
  
Who is ˹rightly˺ guided: the one who crawls facedown or the one who walks upright on the Straight Path?  
The Clear Quran

قُلْ هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنشَأَكُمْ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْأَبْصَـٰرَ وَٱلْأَفْـِٔدَةَ ۖ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ  
  
  
Say, ˹O Prophet,˺ “He is the One Who brought you into being and gave you hearing, sight, and intellect. ˹Yet˺ you hardly give any thanks.”  
The Clear Quran

قُلْ هُوَ ٱلَّذِى ذَرَأَكُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ  
  
  
˹Also˺ say, “He is the One Who has dispersed you ˹all˺ over the earth, and to Him you will ˹all˺ be gathered.”  
The Clear Quran

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَـٰذَا ٱلْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَـٰدِقِينَ  
  
  
˹Still˺ they ask ˹the believers˺, “When will this threat come to pass, if what you say is true?”  
The Clear Quran

قُلْ إِنَّمَا ٱلْعِلْمُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ  
  
  
Say, ˹O Prophet,˺ “That knowledge is with Allah alone, and I am only sent with a clear warning.”  
The Clear Quran

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ زُلْفَةً سِيٓـَٔتْ وُجُوهُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَقِيلَ هَـٰذَا ٱلَّذِى كُنتُم بِهِۦ تَدَّعُونَ  
  
  
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.”   
The Clear Quran

قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَهْلَكَنِىَ ٱللَّهُ وَمَن مَّعِىَ أَوْ رَحِمَنَا فَمَن يُجِيرُ ٱلْكَـٰفِرِينَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ  
  
  
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?”  
The Clear Quran

قُلْ هُوَ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنُ ءَامَنَّا بِهِۦ وَعَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ فِى ضَلَـٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ  
  
  
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.”  
The Clear Quran

قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَصْبَحَ مَآؤُكُمْ غَوْرًا فَمَن يَأْتِيكُم بِمَآءٍ مَّعِينٍۭ  
  
  
Say, “Consider this: if your water were to sink ˹into the earth˺, then who ˹else˺ could bring you flowing water?”  
The Clear Quran