

## Surah 67. Al-Mulk

67.1 Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion: and He over all things Hath Power <sup>5554 5555</sup>

67.2 He Who created Death and Life that He may try which of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might Oft-Forgiving <sup>5556 5557 5558</sup>

67.3 He Who created the seven heavens one above another; no want of proportion wilt thou see in the Creation of (Allah) Most Gracious so turn thy vision again: Seest thou any flaw? <sup>5559</sup>

67.4 Again turn thy vision a second time; (thy) vision will come back to thee dull and discomfited in a state worn out. <sup>5560</sup>

67.5 And We have (from of old) adorned the lowest heaven with Lamps and We have made such (Lamps) <sup>5562</sup> missiles to drive away the Evil Ones and have prepared for them the Penalty of the Blazing Fire. <sup>5561</sup>

<sup>5563</sup> 67.6 For those who reject their Lord (and Cherisher) is the Penalty of Hell: and evil is (such) destination.

<sup>5564</sup> 67.7 When they are cast therein they will hear the (terrible) drawing in of its breath even as it blazes forth.

67.8 Almost bursting with fury: every time a Group is cast therein its Keepers will ask "Did no Warner come to you?" <sup>5565</sup>

67.9 They will say: "Yes indeed: a Warner did come to us but we rejected him and said `Allah never sent down any (Message): ye are in nothing but an egregious delusion!" " <sup>5566</sup>

67.10 They will further say: "Had we but listened or used our intelligence we should not (now) be among the Companions of the Blazing Fire!" <sup>5567</sup>

67.11 They will then confess their sins: but far will be (Forgiveness) from the Companions of the Blazing Fire! <sup>5568</sup>

67.12 As for those who fear their Lord unseen for them is Forgiveness and a great Reward. <sup>5569</sup>

67.13 And whether ye hide your word or publish it He certainly has (full) knowledge of the secrets of (all) hearts.

67.14 Should He not know He that created? And He is the One that understands the finest mysteries (and) is well-acquainted (with them). <sup>5570</sup>

67.15 It is He Who has made the earth manageable for you so traverse ye through its tracts and enjoy of the Sustenance which He furnishes: but unto Him is the Resurrection. <sup>5571 5572</sup>

67.16 Do ye feel secure that He Who is in heaven will not cause you to be swallowed up by the earth when it shakes (as in an earthquake)? <sup>5573</sup>

67.17 Or do ye feel secure that He Who is in Heaven will not send against you a violent tornado (with showers of stones) so that ye shall know how (terrible) was My warning? <sup>5574</sup>

<sup>5575</sup> 67.18 But indeed men before them rejected (My warning): then how (terrible) was My rejection (of them)?

67.19 Do they not observe the birds above them spreading their wings and folding them in? None can uphold them except (Allah) Most Gracious: truly it is He that watches over all things. <sup>5576 5577</sup>

67.20 Nay who is there that can help you (even as) an army besides (Allah) Most Merciful? In nothing but delusion are the Unbelievers. <sup>5578</sup>

67.21 Or who is there that can provide you with Sustenance if He were to withhold His provision? Nay they obstinately persist in insolent impiety and flight (from the Truth). <sup>5579</sup>

67.22 Is then one who walks headlong with his face grovelling better guided or one who walks evenly on a Straight Way? <sup>5580 5581</sup>

67.23 Say: "It is He Who has created you (and made you grow) and made for you the faculties of hearing seeing feeling and understanding: little thanks it is ye give." 5582 5583

5584 67.24 Say: "It is He Who has multiplied you through the earth and to Him shall ye be gathered together."

67.25 They ask: When will this promise be (fulfilled)? If ye are telling the truth. 5585

5586 67.26 Say: "As to the knowledge of the time it is with Allah alone: I am (sent) only to warn plainly in public."

67.27 At length when they see it close at hand grieved will be the faces of the Unbelievers and it will be said (to them): "This is (the promise fulfilled) which ye were calling for!" 5587 5588

67.28 Say: "See ye? If Allah were to destroy me and those with me or if He bestows His Mercy on us yet who can deliver the Unbelievers from a grievous Penalty?" 5589

67.29 Say: "He is (Allah) Most Gracious: we have believed in Him and on Him have we put our trust: so soon will ye know which (of us) it is that is in manifest error." 5590

67.30 Say: "See ye? If your stream be some morning lost (in the underground earth) who then can supply you with clear-flowing water?" 5591

## Author Comments

5554 - What do we mean when we bless the name of Allah, or proclaim (in the optative mood) that the whole Creation should bless the name of the Lord? We mean that we recognise and proclaim His beneficence to us; for all increase and happiness is through Him, "in His hands", -in the hands of Him Who also holds Dominion or Power. In our human affairs we sometimes see the separation of Dominion or Power from Goodness or Beneficence: in the divine nature we recognise that there is no separation or antithesis.

5555 - Mulk: Dominion, Lordship, Sovereignty, the Right to carry out His Will, or to do all that He wills. Power (in the clause following) is the Capacity to carry out His Will, so that nothing can resist or neutralise it. Here is beneficence completely identified with Lordship and Power; and it is exemplified in the verses following. Note that "Mulk" here has a different shade of meaning from Malakut in xxxvi. 83. Both words are from the same root, and I have translated both by the word "Dominion". But Malakut refers to Lordship in the invisible World, while Mulk to Lordship in the visible World. Allah is Lord of both.

5556 - "Created Death and Life." Death is here put before Life, and it is created. Death is therefore not merely a negative state. In ii. 28 we read: "Seeing that ye were without life (literally, dead), and He gave you life: then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return." In liii. 44, again, Death is put before Life. Death, then, is (1) the state before life began, which may be non-existence or existence in some other form: (2) the state in which Life as we know it ceases, but existence does not cease; a state of Barzakh (xxiii. 100), or Barrier or Partition, after our visible Death and before Judgment; after that will be the new Life, which we conceive of under the term Eternity.

5557 - Creation, therefore, is not in mere sport, or without a purpose with reference to man. The state before our present life, or the state after, we can scarcely understand. But our present Life is clearly given to enable us to strive by good deeds to reach a nobler state.

5558 - All this is possible, because Allah is so Exalted in Might that He can perfectly carry out His Will and Purpose, and that Purpose is Love, Mercy, and Goodness to His creatures.

5559 - Cf. lxx. 12, and n. 5526-27. The heavens as they appear to our sight seem to be arranged in layers one above another, and ancient astronomy accounted for the motions of the heavenly bodies in an elaborate scheme of spheres. What we are concerned with here is the order and beauty of the vast spaces and the marvellous bodies that follow regular laws of motion in those enormous spaces in the visible world. From these we are to form some conception of the vastly greater Invisible World, for which we want special spiritual vision.

5560 - Reverting to the indication of the external or visible world, we are asked to observe and study it again and again, and as minutely as our powers will allow. However closely we observe it, we shall find no flaw in it. Indeed the region of enquiry is so vast and stretches so far beyond our ken, that our eyes, aided with the most powerful telescopes, will confess themselves defeated in trying to penetrate to the ultimate mysteries. We shall find no defect in Allah's handiwork: it is our own powers that we shall find fail to go beyond a certain compass.

5561 - "Lowest (or nearest) heaven": see n. 4035 to xxxvii. 6.

5562 - The phenomenon of the shooting stars has been, explained in xv. 16-18, notes 1951-54; and in xxxvii. 6-10, and notes thereon.

5563 - We have seen how the fire in the stars can suggest the beauty and order of the external world; and

yet, when it meets with resistance and disharmony, it can burn and destroy. So in the moral and spiritual world. What can be a greater sign of evil, disharmony, and rebellion than to reject the Cherisher and Sustainer, on Whom our life depends, and from Whom we receive nothing but goodness? The Punishment, then, is Fire in its fiercest intensity, as typified in the next two verses.

5564 - For shahiq see n. 1607 to xi. 106. There shahiq (sobs) was contrasted with zafir (sighs): in the one case it is the drawing in of breath, and in the other the emission of a deep breath. Here the latter process is represented by the verb fara, to swell, to blaze forth, to gush forth. In xi. 40, the verb fara was applied to the gushing forth of the waters of the Flood; here the verb is applied to the blazing forth of the Fire of Punishment. Fire is personified: in its in-take it has a fierce appetite; in the flames which it throws out, it has a fierce aggressiveness. And yet in ultimate result evil meets the same fate, whether typified by water or fire.

5565 - Cf. xxxix. 71, n. 4348. "Every time": it may not be the same angels who are guarding the gates of Hell every time new inmates come in. The pure, innocent angel nature does not know the crookedness of human evil, and is surprised at so many human beings coming in for punishment: it wonders if no warning was conveyed to men, whereas in fact men have a warning in Clear Signs during all the period of their probation. The Clear Signs come from Revelation, from their own conscience, and from all nature around them.

5566 - Allah's Signs were not only rejected or defied, but their very existence was denied. Nay, more, even their possibility was denied, and alas! righteous people and Prophets were persecuted or mocked (xxxvi. 30). They were called fools or madmen, or men under a delusion!

5567 - Man has himself the power given to him to distinguish good from evil, and he is further helped by the teachings of the great Messengers or World Teachers. Where such Teachers do not come into personal contact with an individual or a generation, the true meaning of their teaching can be understood by means of the Reason which Allah has given to every human soul to judge by. It is failure to follow a man's light sincerely that leads to his degradation and destruction.

5568 - The will then have passed through the fire of Judgment and will now be in the fire of Punishment. The Reality will not only now be clear to them, but after the questionings of the angels they cannot even pretend to make any excuses. They will freely confess, but that is not repentance, for repentance implies amendment, and the time for repentance and amendment will have long been past.

5569 - See n. 3902 to xxxv. 18. Read "unseen" adverbially. To fear the Lord is to love Him so intensely that you fear to do anything which is against His Will, and you do it because you realise Him intensely in your hearts, though you do not see Him with your bodily senses. Nor is it of any consequences whether other people see your love or the consequences that flow from your love, for your good deeds are for the love of Allah and not for show in the eyes of men. Such intensity of love obtains forgiveness for any past, and is indeed rewarded with Allah's love, which is immeasurably precious beyond any merits you may possess.

5570 - He Who creates must necessarily know His own handiwork. But lest we should measure His knowledge by such imperfect knowledge as we possess. His knowledge is further characterised as understanding the finest mysteries and being well acquainted with them (Latif and Khabir): see xxii. 63. n. 2844.

5571 - Zalal is used in ii. 71 for an animal trained and tractable: here it is used to qualify the earth, and I have translated 'manageable'. Man has managed to make paths through deserts and over mountains: through rivers and seas by means of ships; through the air by means of airways; he has made bridges and tunnels and other means of communication. But this he has only been able to do because Allah has given him the necessary intelligence and has made the earth tractable to that intelligence.

5572 - In describing Allah's gifts and mercies and watchful care in this our temporary sojourn on this earth, it is made clear that the ultimate end is the Hereafter. The real Beyond, which is the goal, is the life after the Resurrection.

5573 - Cf. xvii. 68. and n. 2263. Also cf. the story of Qarun in xxviii. 76-82. If we feel safe on land, it is because Allah has made this earth amenable, manageable and serviceable to us (verse 15 above). But if we defy Allah and break His Law, have we any security, that even this comparatively unimportant safety in a fleeting world will last? Looking at it from a purely physical point of view, have there not been dreadful earthquakes, typhoons, and tornadoes?

5574 - Cf. xvii. 68; and xxix. 40, n. 3462. Such a violent wind destroyed the wicked Cities which defied Lut's warning.

5575 - Cf. xxii. 42-44, and n. 2822.

5576 - The flight of birds is one of the most beautiful and wonderful things in nature. The make and arrangement of their feathers and bones, and their stream-line shapes, from beak to tail, are instances of purposive adaptation. They soar with outstretched wings; they dart about with folded wings; their motions upwards and downwards, as well as their stabilisation in the air, and when they rest on their feet, have given many ideas to man in the science and art of aeronautics. But who taught or gave to birds this wonderful adaptation? None but Allah, Whose infinite Mercy provides for every creature just those conditions which are best adapted for its life.

5577 - In the Arabic, there is an artistic touch which it is not possible to reproduce in the translation. *Saffat* (spreading their wings) is in the form of the active participle, suggesting the continuous soaring on outspread wings; while *yaqbidhna* (folding them in) is in the Aorist form, suggesting the spasmodic flapping of wings.

5578 - Not the greatest army that man can muster is of any use against the Wrath of Allah; while the constant watchful care of Allah is all-in-all to us, and we can never do without it. If the godless wander about in search for blessings otherwise than in the Mercy and Grace of Allah, they are wandering in vain delusions.

5579 - "Sustenance" here, as elsewhere, (e.g., in xvi. 73, n. 2105), refers to all that is necessary to sustain and develop life in all its phases. Allah Most Gracious is the Source of all our Sustenance, and if we persist in looking to Vanities for our Sustenance, we are pursuing a mirage, and, if we examine the matter, we are only following obstinate unimpulses of rebellion and impiety.

5580 - Cf. xxvii. 90, and n. 3320. The man of probity is the man who walks evenly on a Straight Way, his feet guided by Allah's Light and his heart sustained by Allah's Mercy. The man who chooses evil grovels, with his face down, in paths of Darkness, stumbling on the way, and in constant distrust and fear, the fear of Evil. The two kinds of men are poles apart, although they live on the same earth, see the same Signs, and are fed with the same Mercies from Allah.

5581 - Like Abraham trying to guide his unbelieving father: Cf. xix. 43.

5582 - The Prophet is asked to draw constant attention to Allah, the source of all growth and development, the Giver of the faculties by which we can judge and attain to higher and higher spiritual dignity. And yet, such is our self-will, we use our faculties for wrong purposes and thus show our ingratitude to Allah.

5583 - For anshaa see n. 923 to vi. 98.

5584 - Mankind, from one set of parents, has been multiplied and scattered through the earth. Men have not only multiplied in numbers but they have developed different languages and characteristics, inner and outer. But they will all be gathered together at the End of Things, when the mischief created by the wrong exercise of man's will be cancelled, and the Truth of Allah will reign universally.

5585 - The Unbelievers are sceptical, but they are answered in the next two verses.

5586 - The Judgment is certain to come. But when it will exactly come, is known to Allah alone. The Prophet's duty is to proclaim that fact openly and clearly. It is not for him to punish or to hasten the punishment of evil. Cf. xxii. 47-49.

5587 - "It", i.e., the fulfilment of the promise, the Day of Judgment. When it is actually in sight, then the Unbelievers realise that those whom they used to laugh at for their Faith were in the right, and that they themselves, the sceptics, were terribly in the wrong.

5588 - They had defiantly asked for it. Now that it has come near, and it is too late for repentance, there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth".

5589 - The sceptics might say and do say to the righteous: "Ah well! if calamities come, they involve the good with the bad, just as you say that Allah showers His mercies on both good and evil!" The answer is: "Don't you worry about us: even supposing we are destroyed, with all who believe with us, is that any consolation to you? Your sins must bring on you suffering, and nothing can ward it off. If we get any sorrows or sufferings, we take them as a mere trial to make us better, for we believe in Allah's goodness and we put our trust in Him." See next verse.

5590 - See the end of the last note. "Our Faith tells us that Allah will deliver us from all harm if we sincerely repent and lead righteous lives. You, Unbelievers, have no such hope. When the real adjustment of values is established, you will soon see whether we were in the wrong or you!"

5591 - The Sura is closed with a parable, taken from a vital fact of our physical life, and leading up to the understanding of our spiritual life. In our daily life, what would happen if we woke up some fine morning to find that the sources and springs of our water-supply had disappeared and gone down into the hollows of the earth? Nothing could save our life. Without water we cannot live, and water cannot rise above its level, but always seeks a lower-level. So in spiritual life. Its sources and springs are in the divine wisdom that flows from on high. Allah is the real source of that life, as He is of all forms of life. We must seek His Grace and Mercy. We cannot find grace or mercy or blessing from anything lower. His Wisdom and Mercy are like, fresh clear-flowing spring-water, not like the muddy murky wisdom and goodness of this lower world which is only relative, and which often hampers life rather than advances it.

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