

Sūrah 67: al-Mulk

Period of Revelation

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

Theme and Subject Matter

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

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

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

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

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

In v. 24-27, it has been said: "You have ultimately to appear before your God in any case. It is not for the Prophet to tell you the exact time and date of the event. His only duty is to warn you beforehand of its inevitable occurrence. Today you do not listen to him and demand that he should cause the event to occur and

appear prematurely before you; but when it does occur, and you see it with your own eyes, you will then be astounded. Then, it will be said to you: "This is the very thing you were calling to be hastened."

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

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

Sūrah 67: al-Mulk¹⁵⁸⁵

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful

1. Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion, and He is over all things competent -
2. [He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving -
3. [And] who created seven heavens in layers.¹⁵⁸⁶ 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?
4. Then return [your] vision twice again.¹⁵⁸⁷ [Your] vision will return to you humbled while it is fatigued.
5. And We have certainly beautified the nearest heaven with lamps [i.e., stars] and have made [from] them what is thrown at the devils¹⁵⁸⁸ and have prepared for them the punishment of the Blaze.
6. And for those who disbelieved in their Lord is the punishment of Hell, and wretched is the destination.
7. When they are thrown into it, they hear from it a [dreadful] inhaling while it boils up.
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?"
9. They will say, "Yes, a warner had come to us, but we denied and said, 'God has not sent down anything. You are not but in great error.'"
10. And they will say, "If only we had been listening or reasoning, we would not be among the companions of the Blaze."
11. And they will admit their sin, so [it is] alienation¹⁵⁸⁹ for the companions of the Blaze.
12. Indeed, those who fear their Lord unseen will have forgiveness and great reward.
13. And conceal your speech or publicize it; indeed, He is Knowing of that within the breasts.
14. Does He who created not know,¹⁵⁹⁰ while He is the Subtle, the Acquainted?
15. It is He who made the earth tame¹⁵⁹¹ for you - so walk among its slopes and eat of His provision - and to Him is the resurrection.
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?¹⁵⁹²
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.

¹⁵⁸⁵ *Al-Mulk*: Dominion.

¹⁵⁸⁶ i.e., one covering or fitting over the other.

¹⁵⁸⁷ i.e., repeatedly.

¹⁵⁸⁸ Therby driving them from the heavens and preventing them from eavesdropping. See 72:8-9.

¹⁵⁸⁹ From all good and from God's mercy.

¹⁵⁹⁰ Another accepted meaning is "Does He not know those whom He created...?"

¹⁵⁹¹ i.e., stable and subservient.

¹⁵⁹² In a circular motion, as in an earthquake.

18. And already had those before them denied, and how [terrible] was My reproach.
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.
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.
21. Or who is it that could provide for you if He withheld His provision? But they have persisted in insolence and aversion.
22. Then is one who walks fallen on his face better guided or one who walks erect on a straight path?
23. Say, "It is He who has produced you and made for you hearing and vision and hearts [i.e., intellect]; little are you grateful."
24. Say, "It is He who has multiplied you throughout the earth, and to Him you will be gathered."
25. And they say, "When is this promise, if you should be truthful?"
26. Say, "The knowledge is only with God, and I am only a clear warner."
27. But when they see it¹⁵⁹³ approaching, the faces of those who disbelieve will be distressed, and it will be said, "This is that for which you used to call."¹⁵⁹⁴
28. Say, [O Muhammad], "Have you considered:¹⁵⁹⁵ whether God should cause my death and those with me or have mercy upon us, who can protect the disbelievers from a painful punishment?"
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."
30. Say, "Have you considered: if your water was to become sunken [into the earth], then who could bring you flowing water?"

¹⁵⁹³ The punishment of which they were warned.

¹⁵⁹⁴ When they challenged their prophets, saying, "Bring on the punishment, if you are truthful."

¹⁵⁹⁵ i.e., inform me.