

SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Ad-Dukhan

The Smoke

The complete journey — the blessed night, and a kingdom that wept for no one —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 44 • 59 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

Innaaa anzalnaahu fee laylatim-mubaarakah

3. Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night.

Feehaa yufraqu kullu amrin hakeem

4. On that night is made distinct every wise matter.

*Fartaqib yawma ta'tis-samaaa'u
bidukhaanim-mubeen*

10. Then watch for the Day when the sky will bring a visible smoke.

*Famaa bakat 'alayhimus-samaaa'u wal-ardu wa
maa kaanoo munzareen*

29. And the heaven and earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved.

*Wa maa khalaqnas-samaawaati wal-arda wa maa
baynahumaa laa'ibeen*

38. And We did not create the heavens and the earth and all between them in play.

Innal-muttaqeena fee maqaamin ameen

51. Indeed, the God-conscious will be in a secure place.

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A Blessed Night

Beta, this surah opens with 'Ha Meem' and an oath by 'the clear Book' — and then announces something that changed history: 'INNA ANZALNAHU FEE LAYLATIN MUBARAKAH — indeed, WE SENT IT DOWN during a BLESSED NIGHT — INNA KUNNA MUNZIREEN — indeed, We were to WARN.'

The scholars explain this blessed night as Laylatul-Qadr, in Ramadan — the night mentioned in Surah Al-Qadr, on which the Quran descended complete to the lowest heaven before being revealed in portions.

'FEEHA YUFRAQU KULLU AMRIN HAKEEM — on it is made DISTINCT every WISE matter — AMRAN MIN 'INDINA — a command from Us — INNA KUNNA MURSILEEN — indeed, We were to send.'

Beta, 'yufraqu' — separated, distinguished, apportioned. On that night the decrees for the coming year are distributed to the angels: provisions, lifespans, events. Everything already known to Allah eternally, but on that



night handed out for execution.

'RAHMATAN MIN RABBIK — as a MERCY from your Lord.' Beta, note that the whole revelation is summarised in one word: mercy.

And then the surah reminds us who this Lord is:
'RABBIS-SAMAWATI WAL-ARDI WA MA BAYNAHUMA
IN KUNTUM MOOQINEEN — Lord of the heavens and
the earth and whatever is between them, IF YOU
WOULD BE CERTAIN — LA ILAHA ILLA HUWA
YUHYEE WA YUMEET — there is no deity except Him;
He gives life and causes death — RABBUKUM WA
RABBU ABA'IKUMUL-AWWALEEN — your Lord and
the Lord of your FIRST FOREFATHERS.'

Beta, that last phrase is a quiet argument in itself: the God you are being called to is not a new invention. He is the Lord your ancestors had before the idols were carved.

The Day of Smoke



'BAL HUM FEE SHAKKIN YAL'ABOON — rather, they are in DOUBT, AMUSING themselves.' Beta, doubt combined with play — that is the state of a heart that has never taken the question seriously.

'FARTAQIB YAWMA TA'TIS-SAMA'U BI-DUKHANIN MUBEEN — then WATCH for the Day the SKY will bring a VISIBLE SMOKE — YAGHSHAN-NAS — ENVELOPING the people — HAZA 'AZABUN ALEEM — this is a painful punishment.'

'RABBANAK-SHIF 'ANNAL-'AZABA INNA MU'MINOON — Our Lord, REMOVE from us the punishment; indeed, WE ARE BELIEVERS!'

Beta, the scholars differ about this smoke, and both explanations are instructive.

Ibn Mas'ud (radiyallahu anhu) explained it as something that had already occurred: when Quraysh persisted in denial, the Prophet ﷺ prayed against them, and they were struck by a severe famine — so severe that men would look up at the sky and, from hunger and



exhaustion, see it as if filled with smoke. In their desperation they came to the Prophet ﷺ begging him to pray for relief, promising belief. Relief came — and they returned to their old ways.

Others among the companions and scholars held that it is a sign yet to come before the Hour, a real smoke that will cover the earth.

Beta, and whichever explanation one holds, the lesson in the ayahs is identical, and it is a lesson about US: 'ANNA LAHUMUZ-ZIKRA WA QAD JA'AHUM RASOOLUN MUBEEN — how can there be a REMINDER for them, when a clear Messenger had already come to them? THUMMA TAWALLAW 'ANHU — then they turned away from him.'

'INNA KASHIFUL-'AZABI QALEELAN INNAKUM 'A'IDOOON — indeed, We will REMOVE the punishment a LITTLE — but INDEED, YOU WILL RETURN (to disbelief).'



Beta, this is one of the most honest descriptions of human nature in the Quran. In the crisis: 'Ya Allah, save me and I will change.' After the crisis: back to exactly the same life.

Every one of us has done it. In the hospital corridor we make promises. When the illness lifts, the promises quietly expire. Allah says: We know — you will return.

Beta, so here is the practical test of a sincere tawbah: it is not what you said during the difficulty. It is what you did three months after it ended.

Musa and a Kingdom That Nobody Wept For

The surah then tells the story of Musa (alaihi salam) and Firaun — with a distinctive emphasis.

'WA LAQAD FATANNA QABLAHUM QAWMA
FIR'AWNA WA JA'AHUM RASOOLUN KAREEM — and
We tried before them the people of Firaun, and there
came to them a NOBLE MESSENGER — AN ADDOO



ILAYYA 'IBADALLAH — (saying): DELIVER TO ME the SERVANTS OF ALLAH — INNI LAKUM RASOOLUN AMEEN — indeed, I am to you a TRUSTWORTHY messenger.'

Beta, note his demand: give me Allah's servants. He came to free enslaved people, calling them by their true title — not 'the Israelites', but 'the servants of ALLAH'. Beta, that is how a believer sees the oppressed: not as a category, but as people who belong to Allah.

'WA AN LA TA'LOO 'ALALLAH — and do NOT BE ARROGANT toward Allah — INNI ATEEKUM BI-SULTANIN MUBEEN — indeed, I have come to you with clear authority.'

'WA INNI 'UZTU BI-RABBEE WA RABBIKUM AN TARJUMOON — and indeed, I have SOUGHT REFUGE in my Lord and your Lord, lest you STONE me.'

Beta, the greatest prophet of his time, standing before the greatest tyrant of his time, and his protection is not an army — it is 'I have sought refuge in my Lord'.



Then Allah commanded him: 'FA-ASRI BI-'IBADEE
LAYLAN INNAKUM MUTTABA'OON — travel with MY
SERVANTS by NIGHT; indeed, you will be PURSUED —
WATRUKIL-BAHRA RAHWA — and LEAVE THE SEA in
stillness, parted — INNAHUM JUNDUN
MUGHRAQOON — indeed, they are an army to be
DROWNED.'

Beta, note the instruction: 'utrukil-bahra rahwa' —
leave the sea as it is, open and calm. Musa was not to
close it behind him. The open path was itself the trap:
the pursuing army saw a road through the water and
could not resist it.

'KAM TARAKOO MIN JANNATIN WA 'UYOON — how
much they LEFT BEHIND of gardens and springs — WA
ZUROO'IN WA MAQAMIN KAREEM — and crops and
noble sites — WA NA'MATIN KANOO FEEHA
FAKIHEEN — and comforts in which they were
delighted!'



Beta, feel this ayah. An entire civilisation's wealth — gardens, canals, palaces, monuments that still stand today — all left behind in one morning. The owners drowned, and the property remained, waiting for other people: 'KAZALIKA WA AWRATHNAHA QAWMAN AKHAREEN — thus, and We caused another people to INHERIT it.'

And then, beta, the ayah that gives this passage its unforgettable sting: 'FA-MA BAKAT 'ALAYHIMUS-SAMA'U WAL-ARDU — SO THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH WEPT NOT FOR THEM — WA MA KANOO MUNZAREEN — nor were they REPRIEVED.'

Beta, understand what this means. Firaun ruled the greatest empire on earth. He was worshipped as a god. His death should have been the greatest tragedy in the world's history. And Allah records: nobody wept. Not one person of significance, not the sky, not the earth.

The scholars explained this ayah beautifully: they said the heaven and earth weep for the believer — for the



place of his prayer where he used to prostrate, and the place in the sky where his good deeds used to ascend. And the tyrant had no such place. He left no prayer spot on the earth, and no rising deeds in the sky. So nothing had any reason to miss him.

Beta, that is a question worth asking yourself tonight: when I leave, will any patch of this earth have reason to weep for me? Is there a spot where I regularly put my forehead down? Is there a road in the sky worn by my deeds going up?

Did You Think You Were Created Aimlessly?

The surah then addresses the deniers' demand: 'IN HIYA ILLA MAWTATUNAL-OOLA WA MA NAHNU BI-MUNSHAREEN — there is nothing but our first death, and we will not be resurrected. FA'TOO BI-ABA'INA IN KUNTUM SADIQEEEN — so BRING BACK OUR FOREFATHERS, if you are truthful!'



Beta, they wanted resurrection as a party trick — bring my grandfather back so I can see it. And Allah answers by pointing to a nation stronger than them: 'A HUM KHAYRUN AM QAWMU TUBBA'IN WAL-LAZINA MIN QABLIHIM AHLAKNAHUM INNAHUM KANOO MUJRIMEEN — are they better, or the people of Tubba' and those before them? We destroyed them; indeed, they were criminals.'

And then, beta, the ayah that answers the deepest question of human existence: 'WA MA KHALAQNAS-SAMAWATI WAL-ARDA WA MA BAYNAHUMA LA'IBEEN — and We did NOT create the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them IN PLAY — MA KHALAQNAHUMA ILLA BIL-HAQQI WA LAKINNA AKTHARAHUM LA YA'LAMOON — We did not create them except in TRUTH, but most of them do not know.'

Beta, 'la'ibeen' — playing. This vast, precise, staggering universe is not a toy that was assembled for amusement. It has a purpose, and so do you. A person who lives as



though there is no purpose is contradicting the whole design he is standing inside.

The Tree of Zaqquum, and the Secure Place

Then the surah shows both destinations, and the contrast is severe.

'INNA SHAJARATAZ-ZAQQOOM — indeed, the TREE OF ZAQQUM — TA'AMUL-ATHEEM — is the food of the SINFUL — KAL-MUHL — like MURKY OIL, molten metal — YAGHLEE FIL-BUTOON — it BOILS in the bellies — KA-GHALYIL-HAMEEM — like the boiling of scalding water.'

And the command: 'KHUZOOHU FA'TILOOHU ILA SAWA'IL-JAHEEM — seize him and drag him into the midst of the Blaze — THUMMA SUBBOO FAWQA RA'SIHI MIN 'AZABIL-HAMEEM — then pour over his head the punishment of scalding water — ZUQ INNAKA ANTAL-'AZEEZUL-KAREEM — TASTE! INDEED, YOU ARE THE MIGHTY, THE NOBLE ONE!'



Beta, feel the crushing irony of that last line. In the world he was called 'the mighty', 'the honourable', 'sir', 'your excellency'. Those titles are read back to him at that moment. Every honorific we collect in this life will sound very different there if it was not built on taqwa.

And then the surah turns: 'INNAL-MUTTAQEENA FEE MAQAMIN AMEEN — indeed, the God-conscious will be in a SECURE PLACE — FEE JANNATIN WA 'UYOON — among gardens and springs — YALBASOONA MIN SUNDUSIN WA ISTABRAQIN MUTAQABILEEN — wearing fine silk and brocade, FACING EACH OTHER.'

Beta, 'maqamin ameen' — a place of SECURITY. Of all the descriptions Allah could have led with, He chose safety. Because beta, think honestly: how much of your anxiety in this life is about security? The job, the health report, the children's future, the money lasting, the country's condition. There, the first quality of the place is that it is SAFE. Permanently.



And 'mutaqabileen' — facing one another. No one has their back to anyone. Beta, in Jannah even the seating arrangement removes loneliness.

'LA YAZOOQOONA FEEHAL-MAWTA
ILLAL-MAWTATAL-OOLA — they will not taste death
therein except the FIRST DEATH — WA WAQAHUM
'AZABAL-JAHEEM — and He will protect them from the
punishment of Hellfire — FADLAN MIN RABBIK — AS
A BOUNTY FROM YOUR LORD — ZALIKA
HUWAL-FAWZUL-'AZEEM — THAT is the GREAT
ATTAINMENT.'

Beta, notice: 'fadlan min Rabbik' — as a FAVOUR from your Lord. After all their striving, the final entry is still described as a gift. And notice what is named as the great attainment — not the silk, not the springs: being PROTECTED from the Fire and never dying again.

And the surah's last instruction: 'FA-INNAMA
YASSARNAHU BI-LISANIK LA'ALLAHUM
YATAZAKKAROON — indeed, We have made it EASY IN



YOUR TONGUE that they might be REMINDED —
FARTAQIB INNAHUM MURTAQIBOON — so WATCH
— indeed, they are watching.'

Beta, two parties are waiting: the deniers waiting for the believer to fail, and the believer waiting for Allah's promise. One of those two waits ends well. And the surah leaves us there — watching, patiently, on the right side.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. The Quran descended on a blessed night as a MERCY — treat Ramadan's nights as the season Allah chose for His greatest gift.
2. The God you worship is the Lord of your earliest forefathers — tawheed is not a new invention.
3. Crisis promises are cheap: judge your tawbah by what you do three months after the relief arrives.
4. See the oppressed as Musa named them — 'the servants of Allah', not a category.



5. Leave behind a place of sujood on the earth and a road of rising deeds in the sky, so that something has reason to weep for you.

6. The universe was not created 'in play' — a purposeless life contradicts the design you are standing in.

7. The first quality of Jannah is SECURITY — and even after all your striving, entry remains a favour from your Lord.

Ya Allah, let the heavens and the earth have reason to weep for us, and place us in a secure place, facing one another, never to taste death again. Ameen.

— This is a simplified, faithful retelling for understanding, based on the Quran's translation and established tafseer (Ibn Kathir and others). For deeper study, always read with a qualified teacher. —

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