



CHAPTER 44

Al-Dukhān: The Drought

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 3 sections; 59 verses)

This is the fifth chapter of the *Hā Mim* group. It is known as *The Drought*, from the prophecy of the drought contained in v. 10. This prophecy is followed by another indicating that a severer punishment would follow, if they did not repent. The case of Pharaoh, who was drowned because he hardened his heart, is then cited. The remaining two sections of the chapter are devoted to a description of the condition of the righteous and the wicked. The chapter is, as it were, an explanation of the nature of the doom which awaited the opponents.

SECTION 1: Lighter Punishment followed by Severer

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
the Merciful. حَمْدٌ

1 Beneficent God!

2 By the Book that makes manifest!

3 We revealed it on a blessed night^a — truly We are ever warning.

4 Therein is made clear every affair full of wisdom^a —

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ ﴿١﴾
إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ
إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ﴿٢﴾
فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٣﴾

3a. The revelation of the Holy Qur'ān on a *blessed night* has a deeper meaning beneath it than the mere fact that the revelation began on the blessed night which is elsewhere called *lailat al-Qadr* (97:1), one of the last ten nights in the month of Ramaḍān. The *night* stands for a time of darkness, and hence a time of ignorance, when true knowledge had disappeared from the world. A prophet's advent is always preceded by such darkness, and when the Holy Prophet made his appearance, such darkness prevailed in all countries of the world. This night is called a blessed night because in it the world received the greatest manifestation of Divine light.

4a. Divine revelation distinguishes truth from falsehood and reveals the treasures of wisdom to men.

- 5 A command from Us — truly We are ever sending messengers —
 5 أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ۝
- 6 A mercy from thy Lord — truly He is the Hearing, the Knowing,
 6 رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝
- 7 The Lord of the heavens and the earth and what is between them, if you would be sure.
 7 رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۝
 ۝ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّوقِنِينَ ۝
- 8 There is no God but He; He gives life and causes death — your Lord and the Lord of your fathers of yore.
 8 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ رَبُّكُمْ وَالرَّبُّ آبَائِكُمْ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۝
- 9 Nay, in doubt they sport.
 9 بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ يَلْعَبُونَ ۝
- 10 So wait for the day when the heaven brings a clear drought,^a
 10 فَانظُرْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ۝
- 11 Enveloping men. This is a painful chastisement.
 11 يَغشى النَّاسَ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝
- 12 Our Lord, remove from us the chastisement — surely we are believers.
 12 رَبَّنَا اكشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّا مُؤْمِنُونَ ۝
- 13 When will they be reminded? And a Messenger has indeed come, making clear;
 13 أَتَى لَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّبِينٌ ۝
- 14 Yet they turned away from him and said: One taught (by others), a madman!
 14 ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا مُعَلَّمٌ مَّجْنُونٌ ۝

10a. *Dukhān* means *smoke*, or *mischief*, or *dearth*, or *drought*, or *hunger* (LL). The commentators agree on the basis of highly trustworthy reports that its meaning here is *drought*. According to T, *dukhān* means *jadab*, i.e., *dearth* or *drought*, and *jū'* or *famine*, for (the drought brought on such misery that) the hungry man beheld smoke between him and the sky. Others, however, say the real reason why *hunger* is called *dukhān* is that because of the dry earth in a drought dust rises, creating a dusty atmosphere, which is likened to *smoke* (LL). The chapter, as the whole tenor of it shows, belongs to the early Makkan period. The suggestion that this verse and those that follow, up to the 16th, or according to some only vv. 15 and 16, belong to Madinah, is entirely without foundation. The statements made in these verses are all prophetic, and such is also the statement of v. 15, *We shall remove the chastisement a little*, because the removal of the drought was followed by the “violent seizing”, which brought on the conquest of Makkah. The Hadīth has the following reference to it: “When the Prophet invited the Quraysh to Islām, they rejected him and opposed him; so he prayed, O Allāh, help me against them with seven years like the seven years of Joseph. So famine and distress overtook them and all their resources were exhausted, until they ate dead bodies, and a man used to look to heaven, and he saw between him and it something like smoke on account of hard affliction” (B. 65: xlv, 4).

15 We shall remove the chastisement a little, (but) you will surely return (to evil).

إِنَّا كَاشِعُوا الْعَذَابَ كَثِيرًا إِنَّا مُعِيدُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

16 On the day when We seize (them) with the most violent seizing; surely We shall exact retribution.^a

يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرَى إِنَّا مُنتَقِمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

17 And certainly We tried before them Pharaoh's people and a noble messenger came to them,

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

18 Saying: Deliver to me the servants of Allāh.^a Surely I am a faithful messenger to you.

أَنْ أَدِّوْا إِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ ﴿١٨﴾

19 And exalt not yourselves against Allāh. Surely I bring to you a clear authority.

وَأَنْ لَا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي آتِيكُمْ بِسُلْطَنِ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٩﴾

20 And I take refuge with my Lord and your Lord, lest you stone me to death.

وَإِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَنْ تَرَجُمُونِ ﴿٢٠﴾

21 And if you believe not in me, leave me alone.

وَإِنْ لَّمْ تُوْمِنُوا لِي فَاعْتَزِلُونِ ﴿٢١﴾

22 Then he called upon his Lord: These are a guilty people.

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنَّهُ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ مُّجْرِمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

23 So go forth with My servants by night; surely you will be pursued,

فَأَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلًا إِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

24 And leave the sea behind calm.^a Surely they are a host to be drowned.

وَاصْرَفْ الْبِحْرَ رَهَوًّا إِنَّهُمْ مَحْدُودٌ مُّخْرَقُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

16a. The prophecy here seems to refer to the constant defeats in battle that were to be suffered by the Quraysh, beginning with the battle of Badr, and resulting in the final overthrow of their power by the seizure of Makkah. Ibn Mas'ūd says that by *violent seizing* is meant the *day of Badr* (B. 65: xliv, 4). The discomfiture of the power of the Quraysh began with Badr, and that power was utterly broken with the conquest of Makkah.

18a. Moses wanted the Israelites to be allowed to leave Egypt.

24a. *Rahw* has several significances. It means *an intervening space between two things* (T), the sea or the river in this case being an intervening space between the Israelites and the Egyptians. It also means *calm* (T), it being implied that there was no storm in the sea when it was left by the Israelites, so that the Egyptians, finding it calm and motionless, followed the Israelites. Or *rahw* may signify *moving along easily*, referring to the Israelites going along without fear of being overtaken.

- 25 How many of the gardens and springs they left behind! كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۝
- 26 And cornfields and noble places! وَشُرُورٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ ۝
- 27 And goodly things wherein they rejoiced! وَتَعْمَةٍ كَانُوا فِيهَا فِكْهِينَ ۝
- 28 Thus (it was). And We made other people inherit them. كَذَلِكَ تَنْوَرُهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ۝
- 29 So the heaven and the earth wept not for them, nor were they respite^a. مَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنظَرِينَ ۝

SECTION 2: Good and Evil Rewarded

- 30 And We indeed delivered the Children of Israel from the abasing chastisement, وَكَفَدْنَا نَجِينًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ ۝
- 31 From Pharaoh. Surely he was haughty, prodigal. مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيًّا مِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ۝
- 32 And certainly We chose them above the nations, having knowledge. وَكَفَدْنَا خَيْرَهُمْ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۝
- 33 And We gave them signs wherein was clear blessing. وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا فِيهِ بَلَاءٌ مُبِينٌ ۝
- 34 These do indeed say: إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لِكَيْفَقُولُونَ ۝
- 35 There is naught but our first death and we shall not be raised again. إِنَّ هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْأُولَىٰ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُنشَرِينَ ۝
- 36 So bring our fathers (back), if you are truthful. فَأْتُوا يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝
- 37 Are they better or the people of Tubba',^a and those before them? We أَهْمُ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ

29a. The weeping for a dead man signifies the remembering of his good qualities or actions, which often bring tears to the eyes. *The heaven and the earth* wept not for them because they had neither the love of God in their hearts, nor had they done anything for the good of men, so that their good qualities should have been remembered either in heaven or on earth.

37a. *Tubba'* is the surname of the kings of Yaman, but the name *Tubba'* was given only to those kings of Yaman who were rulers of Saba' and Ḥaḍramaut and the Ḥimyar (LA). Generally *Tubba'* is taken to be the title of the kings of the Ḥimyar. RM quotes I'Ab as saying that the particular *Tubba'* spoken of here was a prophet. It is generally believed that he was a believer in God, while his people were disbelievers.

destroyed them, for surely they were guilty.

38 And We did not create the heavens and the earth and that which is between them in sport.

39 We created them not but with truth, but most of them know not.

40 Surely the day of Decision is the term for them all,

41 The day when friend will avail friend in naught, nor will they be helped —

42 Save those on whom Allāh has mercy. Surely He is the Mighty, the Merciful.

قَبْلِهِمْ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ۝

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَعِبِينَ ۝

مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْقَضَاءِ يَمِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ۝

يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي مَوْلَى عَنْ مَوْلَى شَيْئًا وَ لَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ۝

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝

SECTION 3: Good and Evil Rewarded

43 Surely the tree of Zaqqūm^a

44 Is the food of the sinful,

45 Like molten brass; it seethes in (their) bellies

46 Like boiling water.

47 Seize him, then drag him into the midst of hell;

48 Then pour on his head of the torment of boiling water —

49 Taste — thou art forsooth the mighty, the honourable!^a

50 Surely this is what you doubted.

51 Those who keep their duty are indeed in a secure place —

إِنَّ شَجَرَةَ الزَّقُّومِ ۝

طَعَامُ الْآثِمِينَ ۝

كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ ۝

كَغَلِي الْحَمِيمِ ۝

خُذُوهُ فَاعْتَلُوهُ إِلَىٰ سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ ۝

ثُمَّ صَبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ ۝

ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ ۝

إِنَّ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ ۝

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ ۝

43a. See 37:62a.

49a. Those who considered themselves mighty and honourable in the land and tried their utmost to exterminate the Truth were ultimately brought low in the land in this very life and thus tasted the consequences of their arrogance.

52 In gardens and springs,

53 Wearing fine and thick silk, facing
one another —

54 Thus (shall it be). And We shall
join them to pure, beautiful ones.^a

55 They call therein for every fruit
in security —

56 They taste not therein death,
except the first death; and He will save
them from the chastisement of hell —

57 A grace from thy Lord. This is
the great achievement.

58 So We have made it easy in thy
tongue that they may mind.

59 Wait then; surely they (too) are
waiting.

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۝٥٢

يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُندُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ
مُتَقَابِلِينَ ۝٥٣

كَذَلِكَ وَرَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ ۝٥٤

يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ آمِنِينَ ۝٥٥
لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ
الْأُولَىٰ وَوَقَّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ۝٥٦

فَضْلًا مِّن سَرِّكَ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ
الْقَوْمُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝٥٧

فَاِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ۝٥٨

فَاِرْتَقِبْ اِنَّهُمْ مُّرْتَقِبُونَ ۝٥٩

54a. See 52:20a.