

CHAPTER 44, AD-DUKHAN (THE SMOKE)

Rating:

Description: A smoke filled day that will sort the believers from the disbelievers.

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By: Aisha Stacey (© 2019 IslamReligion.com)

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Introduction

This chapter was revealed in Mecca; and all Meccan chapters discuss or describe the fundamentals of faith. The title, The Smoke, is derived from verse ten in which a smoke-filled day is depicted. The majority of scholars believe that this refers to a sign of the Day of Judgment. Its fifty-nine verses highlight the mercy of the Quran and address the stubbornness of the powerful and wealthy oppressors among the Meccan elite. It compares them to the people of Pharaoh and the people of Tubba. We are told that the righteous will enjoy the bliss of Paradise while the oppressors, and those who considered themselves mighty in this world, will find torment waiting for them in Hell.

Verses 1 – 16 God warns us about the smoke

Chapters 40 to 46 of the Quran begin with the Arabic letters Ha and Mim. The placement of Arabic letters at the beginning of a chapter is a narrative device used in a total of 28 chapters of the Quran. The reason for this is the subject of much scholarly debate, yet the precise answer is known only to God. When we read these letters, we usually find that something about the Quran is mentioned directly after them.

God tells us that the Quran is a scripture that makes things clear. God sent the Quran down to humankind on a blessed night, the Night of Decree, that occurs in the last part of the month of Ramadan. This is the night in which God uses His Wisdom and Knowledge to decide every matter. God has always sent messages, and this Quran is another message.

God hears and knows everything. He is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, therefore pay attention to this if you consider yourself to be a true believer. There is no deity but He, the One who controls life and death. He is your Lord and the Lord of all your ancestors. Some people are in doubt and amuse themselves, but they should be watchful for the day that is filled with smoke.

The smoke will envelop the people causing them to cry out that it is a terrible torment. Then they will beg their Lord to remove the punishment at the same time declaring their belief. How will this sudden faith help them? They were sent a prophet, but they belied him and called him mad. God will hold back the torment, but indeed the disbelievers will slip back into disbelief. The Day will come when they will be seized and assaulted. God will then exact retribution.

Verses 17 – 33 The people of Moses

God explains that the people of Pharaoh were also tested. He sent the messenger Moses to them. Moses asked that the believers be set free from bondage. He also explained that he was a trustworthy messenger from God. He asked the people of Pharaoh not to be haughty then sought refuge with God from any harm they might cause him. They became aggressive even though Moses asked them to leave him alone, so he supplicated to God requesting that he be rescued from the people of Pharaoh, who were indeed criminals and evildoers.

God answered his supplication and advised Moses to organize the Children of Israel and enable them to slip away from their tormentors under the cover of night. They were pursued, however, the Red Sea parted for them. When Pharaoh's people entered the divided sea, it closed over them, and they drowned. Nothing in the heavens or the earth wept for them. The people of Pharaoh left behind gardens and springs, cornfields and buildings, and many other things that delighted them. God ordained that it all be inherited by another people. The Children of Israel were chosen above all others, even though God was aware of their weaknesses, and they were given revelations that contained clear tests.

Verses 34 – 42 The people of Tubba

The elite of Mecca said that they would not be resurrected after death and asked that God return their forefathers if the resurrection was in fact true. God responds by asking if they imagined that they were better than the people of Tubba and those before them? (Tubba was an honorific title used by the kings of Yemen for several generations.) The disbelievers of Makkah have not been able to attain the prosperity and splendor that these people attained, yet because of their moral degeneration they were destroyed, and their worldly splendor could not save them. God was not playing a pointless game when He created the heavens and the earth. They were created for a purpose, but most people fail to understand this. The Day of Judgment is the appointed time for them all. It is a day when relations and friends cannot help one another. The only ones helped will be those to whom God shows Mercy.

Verses 43 – 59 Contrasting Paradise and Hell

The food for the sinners will be from the tree of Zaqqum. It is like murky oil that churns inside their bellies, like the boiling of hot water. One will be seized and dragged into the

middle of the Hellfire, where scalding water will be poured over his head. Here he will be taunted and told that this is all the honor he gets in the Afterlife because he claimed that he was honored upon the earth.

This is the place they argued about; however, in contrast, the righteous will be in a secure place surrounded by gardens and springs. They will be wearing fine silk and brocade garments and have spouses with large beautiful eyes. They will be secure and content, requesting all kinds of fruit. They will only suffer one death and will be eternally protected from the Hellfire. This is a great bounty from God. The Quran has been made easy to recite and remember. It has been revealed in the language of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him, to facilitate this. Wait, God tells Prophet Muhammad, for God is also waiting.

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