

DARUL ULOOM TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
A CONCISE COMMENTARY COURSE OF
THE HOLY QURAN (2001-2020)

29. And the heavens and the earth wept not for them , nor were they given a respite.

In this verse, Allah states that neither the sky nor the earth wept for them when they were destroyed. That is, none in the heavens and the earth felt sad, or grieved for them when they were punished for their deeds. They were also not given any respite and delay for a longer period. Instead, their punishment quickly came to them.

With respect to the above verse which states that the sky and the earth did not weep for them (that is, Pharaoh and his people when they were destroyed), some commentators of the Holy Quran have stated that the verse is not in its literal (lexical) meaning. In fact, it has a metaphorical meaning which explains that the death (and destruction of Pharaoh and his people) was so insignificant that no one missed them or felt sad for them. No change came to anything through their destruction since they were wicked tyrants and oppressors.

Some scholars of the Holy Quran have stated that the verse means that the creation of the heavens (who are the angels), and the creation of the earth (who are the believers) did not weep for them. Instead these creations of the heavens and the earth were happy with the destruction which came to them. This is the opinion which is narrated from Hasan Basri, Ali (R.A), Abdullah bin Abbas (R.A), Mujahid, Saeed bin Jubair'. (Tafseer Al Bahrul Muheet vol.9 pg. 403 Dar Al Fikr Beirut 1992)

Some exegetes of the Holy Quran have stated that the verse which states, 'So, neither the sky nor the earth wept over them' means that they had no righteous actions which used to ascend through the gates of the heavens, which would weep for them when they died, and they had no places on earth where they used to worship Allah which would miss them (and their worship). (Tafseer IbnKatheer vol.5 pg. 389 Dar Al Kitab Al Arabi, Beirut 2013)

While commenting on the above verse, Hafiz Ibn Jareer (A.R) writes, 'Some scholars have stated that it has been stated (in the verse) 'that the sky and earth did not weep for them' because when a believer dies, the sky and earth weep for him for forty days. But nothing wept for Pharaoh and his people because they had no good deeds which ascended to Allah so that the sky may weep for them. There was also no place of worship for them on the earth so that the earth may weep for them'. In support of this explanation, these scholars mention the narration of Saeed bin Jubair (A.R) in which he narrates, 'A man came to Ibn Abbas (R.A) and said, 'O Abu Abbas, Allah says, 'And the heavens and the earth wept not for them, nor were they given respite', do the heavens and earth weep for anyone? Abdullah bin Abbas (R.A) said, 'Yes, there is no one who does not have a gate (door) in the heavens through which his provision comes down and his good deeds ascend. When the believer dies, that gate is closed; it misses him and weeps for him, and the place of prayer on earth where he used to pray and remember Allah also weeps for him. But the people of Pharaoh left no trace of righteousness on the earth and they had no good deeds that ascended to Allah, so the heavens and the earth did not weep for them'. (Tafseer At Tabari vol.25 pg. 147 Dar Ihya At Turath Al Arabi Beirut 2001)

It is narrated from Anas bin Malik (R.A) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, 'There is no believer except that there are two doors for him in the heavens. One door from which his sustenance (Rizq) comes, and one door through which his good deeds ascend. When he dies, both these doors begin to miss him and they weep for him'. The Prophet (ﷺ) then recited the verse, 'And the sky and the earth did not weep for them'. It means that the unbelievers did not do any good deed on the earth so that the earth may weep for them, and they had no good deed which ascended to the heaven so that the heaven may weep for them'. (Tirmidhi - Tafseer Al Qurtubi vol.16 pg. 122MaktabaRasheediyaQueta)

It is also narrated from Abdullah bin Abbas (R.A) regarding the verse which states, 'The sky and the earth did not weep for them', he said, 'This is so because when a believer dies on the earth, the places where he used to perform Salaah in the Masjid begin to miss him, and weep

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for him, and the places in the heavens through which his good speech and actions used to ascend also begin to miss him and these places weep for him’.

The great exegete of the Holy Quran, Adh Dhahak (A.R) states, ‘The heaven and the earth do not weep for an unbeliever. As for the righteous believer, the places of his worship on the earth, as well as the places through which his good deeds ascend in the sky, both weep for him. Qatada (A.R) also states, ‘The places of the earth on which the believer used to perform Salaah, weep for him when he dies, and the places in the sky through which his good deeds used to ascend, weep for him’. (Tafseer Ibn Jareer At Tabari vol.25 pg. 148 Dar Ihya At Turath Al Arabi Beirut 2001)

It is narrated that Mujahid (A.R) said, ‘No believer dies except that the sky and the earth weep for him for forty mornings (days)’. Someone said to him, ‘Does the earth weep?’ He said, ‘Do you find this strange?’ He (Mujahid) then said, ‘Why should the earth not weep for the servant (believer) who used to occupy it with Ruku and Sujood (bowing and prostrations)? And why should the sky not weep for the servant whose voice of saying Takbeer and Tasbeeh sounded in the sky like the sound of bees?’ (Tafseer Ibn Katheer vol.5 pg. 490 Dar Al Kitab Al Arabi, Beirut 2013)

From the above explanations, it is evident that while some commentators of the Holy Quran explain that the ‘weeping of the sky and earth’ is metaphorical in meaning and it is not literal, many of the exegetes and great scholars of Tafseer state that it has a literal meaning and these (the sky and earth) actually weep upon the passing away of a righteous believer. However, this weeping is totally different from the weeping of the other creations. (Ma’ariful Quran English vol.7 pg. 75 Farid Book New Delhi)

Surah Ad Dukhan goes further in verses 30 and 31 and state :

30. And indeed We saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment,
31. From Fir'aun (Pharaoh); Verily! He was arrogant and was of the *Musrifun* (those who transgress beyond bound in spending and other things and commit great sins).

Having mentioned about the destruction of Pharaoh and his people in the previous verses, Allah now highlights His favors and kindness to the Bani Isra’il which He bestowed upon them.

In the above verses (30, 31), He mentions His great help to them when He rescued them from the grievous tortures and torments which they got from Pharaoh. Their male children were killed and their girls were taken as servants and maids. Their men were entrusted to do the most difficult works and were persecuted and beaten for non-compliance. This period of their lives under the control of Pharaoh was certainly the most humiliating torment for them. Allah extended His kindness to them and took them out from the cruelty, oppression and tyranny of Pharaoh who had already crossed all limits of transgression, and had shown himself to be the most arrogant leader in the land of Egypt.

While commenting on the above verses, the great scholar, Allama As Saawi writes, ‘These are from the many favors Allah bestowed upon the Bani Isra’il, and the purpose of revealing this to the Prophet (ﷺ) is to give him comfort, consolation and glad tidings that Allah will rescue him and the believers from the hands of the polytheists who have been cruel and oppressive to them’. (Hashiya As Saawi Ala Al Jalaalain vol.4 pg. 62 Dar Al Fikr Beirut)

Verse32 (of Surah Ad Dukhan) continues and states:

32. And We chose them (the Children of Israel) above the *'Alamin* (mankind, and jinns) with knowledge,

Here, Allah mentions another favor which He granted to the Bani Isra’il, and states that He chose them and selected them above other people at their time. He granted honor and respect to them based on His knowledge that they were deserving of such honor.

Qatada (A.R) states, ‘They were chosen to be more honored and respected than all other people at their time. However, they were not chosen/honored above the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) since Allah has mentioned about the Ummah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, ‘You are the best of all people