



Veils of Nature vis-à-vis Qur'anic Imagery of Fog and Mist: A Multilingual Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research study presents an in-depth examination of the linguistic, scientific and interpretive aspects of the imagery of Fog and Mist in the Holy Qur'an. At the beginning of the research, the etymology (derivative analysis), lexical and linguistic meanings and Arabic meaning of both terms have been clarified to know in which spiritual dimensions the Qur'an has used these phenomena of nature. All the verses of the Holy Qur'an in which references to Fog or Mist are found have been studied in detail. The imagery presented in these verses shows that Fog and Mist are not only natural phenomena but also come up as metaphors for human insight, spiritual veils and divine warning. The existence, formation, and ecological role of fog and mist are also described from a scientific perspective, which reveals the fact that the description of natural phenomena in the Qur'an is consistent with modern scientific principles. Consequently, this study highlights that the imagery of fog and mist in the Qur'an is not simply a seasonal or natural phenomenon, but a symbol of spiritual perception, divine power, and intellectual awakening. This study invites the reader to try to understand the hidden meaning in the veils of nature and recognize the wisdom of the true Creator in every manifestation of the universe.

Keywords: *Fog, Mist, Imagery interpretation, Qur'an and Nature, Languages*

Maximum number of authors of a paper shouldn't be more than two and contribution of second author (if any) should be mentioned below:-

Mutual Development of paper

Introduction

Artistic imagery is a fundamental stylistic feature in the Holy Qur'an, where mental concepts are transformed into vivid forms or movements, psychological states become painted scenes, and human models are portrayed as living figures. Events, landscapes, and narratives are presented as alive and filled with motion, engaging the reader fully. When dialogue is integrated, all elements of imagination converge, transforming the listener into an active spectator who vividly visualizes the unfolding scenes, often forgetting the text is being recited and instead experiencing the narrated event as if it were happening live.

This dynamic use of imagery blends sensory language, human emotion, and narrative action to evoke a deep experiential impact, fostering a profound spiritual connection. The Qur'an effectively employs symbolic and pictorial methods to encapsulate complex human experiences and divine lessons, using concise language to produce rich, multi-layered mental pictures that resonate far beyond mere words¹.

Fog and mist imagery serves as primary metaphor for divine transcendence (*tanzih*) that exceeds human comprehension while remaining immanent within creation. The partial obscuration created by these atmospheric phenomena represents the balance between divine hiddenness and manifestation that characterizes Islamic theology's approach to understanding divine nature².

This progressive quality creates dynamic literary effects that encourage contemplative reading and repeated reflection, with deeper meanings emerging through sustained engagement with atmospheric metaphors that initially appear simple but reveal complex theological implications upon careful examination.

¹. سعاد قمومية وهاجر حاج شريف، "خصائص الصورة الفنية في القرآن الكريم: كتاب التصوير الفني في القرآن الكريم لسيد قطب أنموذجاً"، *مجلة دراسات في العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية* 9، رقم 1 (2023): 15.

². Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 57-79.

Qur'anic fog and mist imagery demonstrates sophisticated understanding of atmospheric processes, humidity conditions, and temperature relationships that create these phenomena. References to dawn fog, coastal mist, and seasonal atmospheric conditions reflect accurate observation of meteorological patterns that enhance the credibility of spiritual metaphors derived from natural phenomena³. Thus, fog and mist imagery in the Qur'an operates as a multifaceted symbol engaging believers intellectually and spiritually, inviting reflection on divine power, human limitation, and ultimate reality.

Etymology of "Fog and Mist": Origins and Meanings

The atmospheric phenomena of fog and mist, while meteorologically similar, have developed distinct etymological pathways in English and related languages. Understanding their linguistic origins reveals insights into how speakers of different languages categorized and conceptualized these weather conditions throughout history.

1. Etymology of "Fog"

The etymology of the term "Fog" can be understood through its linguistic roots in different languages. The following discussion examines the origin, meaning, and development of the term across various linguistic traditions.

Old English and Early Origins

The English word "fog" presents a complex etymological puzzle with multiple possible origins. The most widely accepted derivation traces "fog" to a Scandinavian source, likely Old Norse "fok" meaning "driving snow" or "spray"⁴. This connection suggests that the original concept may have related to any form of atmospheric moisture rather than specifically the low-lying cloud formations we now call fog.

Alternative Etymological Theories

³. Maurice Bucaille. *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1976), 189-205.

⁴. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2023. "Fog; Mist." In *OED Online*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://www.oed.com/>.

Some etymologists propose alternative origins for "fog," including a possible connection to Middle English "fogge," meaning "aftermath grass" or "moss"⁵. This agricultural connection might reflect the observation that thick, low-lying mist often appears over marshy or moss-covered ground. However, this derivation remains disputed among linguistic scholars.

Semantic Development

The semantic evolution of "fog" shows interesting shifts in meaning over time. Early uses of the word sometimes referred to thick, suffocating smoke rather than water vapor, suggesting a broader application to any vision-obscuring atmospheric condition⁶. The modern meteorological specificity developed gradually as scientific understanding of atmospheric phenomena became more precise.

2. Etymology of "Mist"

This section explores the etymology of the term "Mist" by examining its linguistic roots and meanings in different languages, highlighting how the concept has evolved across various traditions and contexts.

Germanic Roots

The word "mist" has clearer Germanic origins, deriving from Old English "mist" with cognates across the Germanic language family⁷. Old High German "mist" and Old Norse "mistr" demonstrate the word's ancient Germanic heritage. The Indo-European root "*meigh-" relates to urination or the emission of liquid, connecting mist etymologically to concepts of water release or vapor production.

Consistency Across Germanic Languages

⁵. Eric Partridge. *Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (London: Routledge, 2006), 236-237, 412-413.

⁶. Anatoly Liberman, *An Analytic Dictionary of English Etymology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 121-124, 403-405.

⁷. Calvert Watkins, *The American Heritage Dictionary of Indo-European Roots*. 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 20-22, 58-60.

Unlike "fog," which shows more complex borrowing patterns, "mist" maintains remarkable consistency across Germanic languages. Modern German "Mist" (though now primarily meaning manure), Dutch "mist," and Swedish "dimma" (from a related root) all demonstrate the ancient Germanic foundation of this atmospheric vocabulary⁸.

Semantic Stability

The meaning of "mist" has remained relatively stable throughout its etymological development. From Old English onward, the word consistently referred to fine water droplets suspended in air, showing less semantic drift than many weather-related terms⁹.

3. Comparative Analysis: Fog vs. Mist

The following comparative analysis examines the concepts of fog and mist by comparing their physical characteristics, formation processes, and effects on visibility. This comparison helps to distinguish between the two atmospheric phenomena and clarifies their respective features.

Meteorological Distinctions in Etymology

The etymological differences between "fog" and "mist" may reflect early speakers' recognition of distinct atmospheric conditions. "Fog," with its possible connection to driving snow or spray, suggests a more dynamic, potentially wind-driven phenomenon. "Mist," with its roots in liquid emission, implies a gentler, more static water vapor condition¹⁰.

Regional and Dialectal Variations

Different English dialects have historically used "fog" and "mist" with varying degrees of distinction. Some regions treat them as synonymous, while others maintain specific meteorological differences. Scottish

⁸. David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language*. 3rd ed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 326-345.

⁹. T. F. Hoad, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 179-307.

¹⁰. Geoffrey Hughes, *A History of English Words*. Malden, MA: (Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 214-232.

English, for example, often uses "haar" (from Dutch/Low German) for coastal fog, demonstrating how geographical conditions influence atmospheric vocabulary ¹¹.

4. Cross-Linguistic Comparisons

This cross-linguistic analysis provides valuable insights into the similarities and differences in the interpretation of the term.

Romance Language Developments

Romance languages developed fog and mist terminology from different Latin roots. Italian "nebbia," Spanish "niebla," and French "brouillard" derive from Latin "nebula" (cloud, mist), while French also uses "brume" from a Germanic borrowing¹². These languages generally use single terms where English distinguishes between fog and mist.

Celtic Language Contributions

Celtic languages contributed atmospheric vocabulary to English in specific regions. Irish "ceo" and Welsh "niwl" for fog/mist entered English as geographical terms in areas of Celtic influence, though they rarely achieved standard English status ¹³.

Scandinavian Influences

The probable Scandinavian origin of "fog" reflects the significant Norse influence on English vocabulary, particularly in atmospheric and maritime terminology. Viking settlements and trade relationships introduced numerous weather-related words that became integrated into English ¹⁴.

¹¹. Mairi Robinson, ed. *The Concise Scots Dictionary* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985), 276-415.

¹². J. N. Adams, *The Regional Diversification of Latin 200 BC – AD 600*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 620-635.

¹³. Kenneth H. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1953), 540-562.

¹⁴. Matthew Townend, *Language and History in Viking Age England*. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 173-198.

5. Morphological Development

The following section explores the morphological development of "Fog" and "Mist", highlighting their structural formation and historical evolution.

Compound Formation

Both "fog" and "mist" readily form compounds in English, demonstrating their productivity in the language. "Fogbank," "foghorn," "misty," and "misting" show how these atmospheric terms extend into related semantic domains¹⁵. The ease of compound formation suggests these words became well-established in English phonological and morphological systems.

Metaphorical Extensions

Both terms developed metaphorical uses beyond their meteorological origins. "Fogging" came to mean obscuring or confusing, while "misty" extended to describe unclear vision or nostalgic emotions. These semantic extensions follow common patterns of weather vocabulary expanding into psychological and abstract domains¹⁶.

6. Historical Documentation

The following section presents the historical documentation of "Fog" and "Mist", exploring their earliest recorded usage and subsequent development in historical and linguistic sources.

Medieval English Texts

Medieval English manuscripts show varying spellings and uses of fog and mist terminology. The Peterborough Chronicle and other historical documents demonstrate the gradual standardization of these terms and their specific meteorological applications¹⁷.

¹⁵. Laurie Bauer, *English Word-Formation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 201-219.

¹⁶. George Lakoff, and Johnson Mark, *Metaphors We Live By*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 15-38.

¹⁷. Clark, Cecily, ed. *The Peterborough Chronicle 1070-1154*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 72-95.

Early Modern Developments

Renaissance and early modern English texts show increasing meteorological precision in fog and mist usage. Scientific texts of the 16th and 17th centuries began distinguishing between different types of atmospheric moisture, influencing the semantic boundaries between these terms¹⁸.

Fog and Mist Terminology Across World Languages

Fog and mist, as ubiquitous atmospheric phenomena, appear in the vocabularies of languages worldwide. However, the ways different languages categorize, distinguish, and conceptualize this weather conditions reveal fascinating insights into cultural perceptions of natural phenomena and linguistic categorization systems¹⁹.

1. Indo-European Language Families

The following section provides an overview of the Indo-European language family.

Germanic Languages

Germanic languages show both shared heritage and divergent developments in fog and mist terminology. Modern German distinguishes "Nebel" (fog/mist) from "Dunst" (haze), with "Nebel" deriving from the same Indo-European root as English "nebula"²⁰. Dutch uses "mist" for fog and "nevel" for mist, demonstrating partial cognate relationships with English. Swedish employs "dimma" for fog and "dis" for mist, while Norwegian uses "tåke" for both phenomena, showing how closely related languages can develop different categorization systems.

Romance Languages

¹⁸. Taavitsainen, Irma, and Päivi Pahta, eds. *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 201-226.

¹⁹. Brent Berlin, and Kay Paul, *Basic Colour Terms: Their Universality and Evolution*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 1-24.

²⁰. Friedrich Kluge, *Etymological Dictionary of the German Language*. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 173-174, 612-613.

Romance languages generally derive their fog terminology from Latin "nebula." Spanish "niebla," Italian "nebbia," Portuguese "névoa," and Romanian "ceață" all trace to this Latin root, though they show phonetic evolution typical of Romance development²¹. French presents more complexity, using "brouillard" (from Germanic origins) for thick fog and "brume" for light mist, demonstrating substrate influence on Romance vocabulary. Catalan "boira" represents a unique development within the Romance family, possibly showing pre-Roman substrate influence.

Celtic Languages

Celtic languages maintain distinct atmospheric vocabularies despite Indo-European relationships. Irish "ceo" and "ceobhrán" distinguish between heavy fog and light mist, while Welsh "niwl" and "tarth" make similar distinctions²². Scottish Gaelic "ceò" relates to Irish usage but also incorporates borrowed terms from Scots English in bilingual regions, showing language contact effects.

2. East Asian Languages

The following section examines the terms for "fog" and "mist" in East Asian languages

Chinese Language Family

Chinese uses "雾" (wù) for fog and "霾" (ǎi) for mist, with characters that originally depicted atmospheric moisture through visual representation²³. Classical Chinese developed sophisticated terminology for different atmospheric conditions, including "霾" (mái) for hazy weather and "岚" (lán) for mountain mist. Regional Chinese varieties show lexical variation, with Cantonese using "霧" (mou) and "靄" (oi) with similar semantic distinctions.

²¹. J. N. Adams, *The Regional Diversification of Latin 200 BC – AD 600*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 620-635.

²². Alexander MacBain, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Gaelic Language*. (Stirling: E. MacKay, 1911), 78-79, 347-348.

²³. John DeFrancis, *The Chinese Language: Fact and Fantasy*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), 84-102.

Japanese Language

Japanese borrowed Chinese characters but developed native vocabulary alongside loan words. "霧" (kiri) represents the primary fog term, while "靄" (moya) describes light mist²⁴. Japanese also maintains native terms like "kasumi" for spring haze and "kemuri" for smoke-like mist, showing seasonal and qualitative distinctions important in Japanese aesthetics and poetry.

Korean Language

Korean "안개" (an-gae) serves as the general fog term, with "박무" (bak-mu) for light mist borrowed from Chinese characters²⁵. Traditional Korean also uses "서리" (seo-ri) for frost-related fog and develops compound terms for specific weather conditions, demonstrating the language's agglutinative capacity for atmospheric description.

3. Semitic Languages

The following section explores the terms used for "fog" and "mist" in Semitic languages.

Hebrew Language

Modern Hebrew uses "ערפל" (arafel) for fog and "אד" (ed) for mist, with biblical Hebrew contributing atmospheric imagery to contemporary usage²⁶. Biblical texts use fog metaphorically for divine mystery and limited human understanding, establishing cultural associations that persist in modern Hebrew literature and religious discourse.

4. African Languages

²⁴. Masayoshi Shibatani, *The Languages of Japan*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 148-169.

²⁵. Iksop Lee and S. Robert Ramsey, *The Korean Language*. (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 47-69.

²⁶. Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language*. (Jerusalem: Carta Jerusalem, 1987), 26, 438-439.

The following section examines the terms for "fog" and "mist" in African languages, focusing on their linguistic origins, meanings, and patterns of usage.

Niger-Congo Languages

Swahili uses "ukungu" for fog with variations like "ukungu mzito" (heavy fog) and "ukungu mwepesi" (light fog) demonstrating Bantu morphological productivity²⁷. Yoruba employs "ìkùkùrù" for fog and develops descriptive compounds for different atmospheric conditions. The precision of fog terminology in African languages often relates to agricultural timing and seasonal recognition.

Afroasiatic Languages

Ethiopian Amharic uses "ጥላ" (t'ela) for fog, while Berber languages of North Africa developed distinct fog vocabularies adapted to Mediterranean coastal conditions²⁸. The diversity within Afroasiatic fog terminology reflects the geographic spread of these languages across diverse climatic zones.

5. Austronesian Languages

This section investigates the terminology associated with "fog" and "mist" in Austronesian languages, with particular attention to their lexical forms.

Maritime Adaptations

Indonesian and Malay use "kabut" for fog, with maritime Austronesian languages developing sophisticated fog vocabulary essential for navigation²⁹. Tagalog uses "hamog" for both fog and dew, showing semantic extension common in tropical languages where atmospheric moisture appears in multiple forms.

Pacific Island Variations

²⁷. E. O. Ashton, *Swahili Grammar*. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1944),112-126.

²⁸. Maarten Kossmann, *Essai sur la phonologie du proto-berbère*. (Cologne: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 1999),182-201.

²⁹. K. Adelaar, Alexander, and P. Nikolaus Himmelman, eds. *The Austronesian Languages of Asia and Madagascar*. (London: Routledge, 2005),95-112.

Pacific Island languages often distinguish sea fog from land fog, reflecting the critical importance of maritime visibility for island cultures. Fijian uses "benu" for fog with various qualifiers, while Hawaiian employs "ohu" with descriptive compounds for different fog types affecting island weather patterns.

6. Arctic and Circumpolar Languages

This section explores the expressions used for "fog" and "mist" in Arctic and Circumpolar languages. It examines their meanings and linguistic variations.

Inuit Language Continuum

Inuit languages famously develop detailed terminology for atmospheric conditions critical to Arctic survival. Different varieties use terms like "tiktaalik" for ice fog and "puviaq" for crystal fog, demonstrating the environmental specificity that characterizes Arctic atmospheric vocabulary³⁰. These distinctions reflect practical knowledge essential for hunting, travel, and weather prediction in polar environments.

Other Circumpolar Languages

Siberian languages like Even and Evenk developed fog terminology adapted to subarctic conditions, with distinctions between river fog, forest fog, and tundra fog reflecting different ecological contexts³¹. These languages often grammatically encode fog's relationship to specific geographical features through complex morphological systems.

7. Tropical and Monsoon Languages

³⁰. Michael Fortescue, Steven Jacobson, and Kaplan Lawrence, *Comparative Eskimo Dictionary*. (Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, 1994), 367-381.

³¹. Brigitte Pakendorf, *Contact in the Prehistory of the Sakha (Yakuts)*. (Utrecht: LOT, 2007), 188-201.

This section examines the terminology for "fog" and "mist" in Tropical and Monsoon languages, highlighting their linguistic expressions, meanings, and contextual usage.

Southeast Asian Adaptations

Languages of monsoon Asia developed fog terminology closely linked to seasonal patterns. Thai uses "หมอก" (mòok) with seasonal qualifiers, while Vietnamese employs " sương mù" distinguishing morning mist from weather-front fog³². These distinctions reflect the integration of atmospheric observation with agricultural and maritime activities.

Tropical African Languages

Tropical African languages often integrate fog terminology with seasonal vocabularies, as fog appearance indicates specific agricultural timing. Languages of highland Africa developed specialized terminology for mountain fog crucial for ecosystem management and crop cultivation.

Cultural Meanings and Symbolism of Fog and Mist Across World Cultures

While fog and mist are universal atmospheric phenomena, their cultural interpretations, symbolic meanings, and roles in mythology, religion, and folklore vary dramatically across human societies. These interpretations reflect deeper cultural relationships with the natural world, concepts of the supernatural, and understanding of the boundaries between the visible and invisible realms³³.

1. Western Cultural Traditions

This section explores the representation of "fog" and "mist" in Western cultural traditions. It highlights their symbolic meanings and cultural significance across different historical and literary contexts.

Celtic Mythology and Folklore

³². Dinh-Hoa Nguyen, *Vietnamese*. (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1997),142-159.

³³. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958),420-445.

Celtic cultures developed rich symbolic associations with fog and mist, viewing them as liminal spaces between the mortal world and the Otherworld. Irish folklore describes the "Tír na nÓg" (Land of the Young) as accessible through mysterious mists that appear suddenly over water or moorland³⁴. Scottish Highland traditions associate morning mist with the presence of spirits and faeries, with certain mists believed to carry away unwary travelers to supernatural realms. Welsh mythology includes the "Mabinogi" tales where heroes encounter otherworldly castles emerging from and disappearing into mist, representing the permeable boundaries between reality and magic.

Germanic and Scandinavian Traditions

Norse mythology incorporates fog as part of the primordial creation story, with "Niflheim" (the world of mist) representing one of the original nine realms³⁵. Germanic folklore associate's morning fog with the breath of sleeping giants or dragons, while sea fog represents the boundary between the world of the living and the realm of the dead. Scandinavian fishing communities developed elaborate beliefs about fog as harboring supernatural beings, with specific rituals performed to ensure safe passage through heavy maritime fog.

Classical Mediterranean Cultures

Ancient Greek culture viewed fog and mist as divine phenomena controlled by atmospheric deities. The concept of "nephele" (cloud-nymph) extended to fog formations, which were seen as semi-divine beings capable of deception and transformation³⁶. Roman augury included fog interpretation, with morning mist patterns providing omens for military campaigns and agricultural timing. The Latin phrase "per

³⁴. Lady Augusta Gregory, *Gods and Fighting Men*. (London: John Murray, 1904),52-76.

³⁵. Snorri Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*. Translated by Jesse L. Byock. (London: Penguin Classics, 2005. Originally published 1220),17-36.

³⁶. Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985),98-117.

nebulam" (through fog) became metaphorical for approaching truth through uncertainty or mystery.

Medieval Christian Symbolism

Medieval Christian thought interpreted fog as representing spiritual confusion, moral uncertainty, or the limitations of human understanding before divine truth. Monastic writings used fog metaphors to describe the soul's journey through spiritual darkness toward illumination³⁷. Gothic architecture deliberately created misty, obscured lighting effects to evoke the mystery of divine presence and the limits of earthly perception.

2. East Asian Cultural Perspectives

This section examines the cultural perspectives on "fog" and "mist" in East Asian traditions.

Chinese Philosophical Traditions

Chinese culture associates fog and mist with fundamental philosophical concepts across multiple traditions. Taoism views mist as embodying the principle of wu wei (effortless action), representing natural flow and transformation without force³⁸. Confucian thought uses fog metaphors for the gradual cultivation of wisdom and the patient process of moral development. Traditional Chinese painting elevates fog depiction to spiritual practice, with mountain mists representing the breath of the earth and the dynamic relationship between visible and invisible elements of nature.

Japanese Aesthetic and Spiritual Traditions

Japanese culture developed sophisticated fog symbolism through both Shinto and Buddhist influences. The aesthetic concept of "mono no aware" (the pathos of things) often employs fog imagery to represent the transient beauty of existence and the bittersweet nature of temporal

³⁷. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999),136-154.

³⁸. Livia Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*. (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2000),356-378.

experience³⁹. Zen Buddhism uses morning mist as a meditation subject, representing the illusory nature of perceived reality and the gradual lifting of spiritual ignorance. Japanese poetry, particularly in the "tanka" and "haiku" traditions, uses seasonal fog references to evoke specific emotional and spiritual states.

Korean Cultural Interpretations

Korean Confucian and shamanistic traditions view fog as a medium for ancestral communication and spiritual transformation. Traditional Korean landscape painting incorporates fog as representing the harmony between heaven and earth, with misty mountain scenes symbolizing the ideal relationship between human society and natural order⁴⁰. Korean folklore includes fog spirits that can bestow wisdom or lead travelers astray, depending on the moral character of the encounter.

3. Indigenous and Traditional Cultures

This section explores the significance of "fog" and "mist" in Indigenous and traditional cultures.

Native American Perspectives

Various Native American cultures attribute sacred significance to fog and mist formations. Pacific Northwest tribes view fog as the breath of Raven or other creator spirits, with morning fog representing renewal and spiritual cleansing⁴¹. Plains tribes interpret ground fog as spirits of ancestors returning to visit the living, while Pueblo cultures associate fog with rain ceremonies and agricultural fertility. Cherokee traditions describe fog as the pathway used by medicine people to travel between the physical and spiritual worlds.

³⁹. Donald Keene, *The Pleasures of Japanese Literature*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 88-104.

⁴⁰. Peter H. Lee, *A History of Korean Literature*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 102-126.

⁴¹. Joseph Epes Brown, *Animals of the Soul: Sacred Animals of the Oglala Sioux*. (Rockport, MA: Element Books, 1991), 45-63.

Australian Aboriginal Perspectives

Aboriginal Australian cultures integrate fog phenomena into Dreamtime narratives and seasonal knowledge systems. Different tribal groups interpret morning mist as ancestral spirits continuing their creative activities, with fog patterns providing navigation cues and seasonal indicators⁴². The Yolngu people of Arnhem Land associate coastal fog with specific ancestral beings whose stories explain both meteorological and spiritual phenomena.

Arctic and Subarctic Cultures

Inuit and other Arctic cultures developed elaborate fog mythology essential for survival in polar environments. Ice fog receives particular attention, with different types of frozen mist associated with specific spirits and supernatural phenomena⁴³. Siberian shamanic traditions use fog as a medium for spirit travel and divination, with shamans interpreting fog patterns for community guidance and healing practices.

4. African Traditional Cultures

This section examines the cultural significance of "fog" and "mist" in African traditional cultures.

Sub-Saharan Spiritual Traditions

Various African cultures view fog as manifestation of ancestral presence and spiritual communication. Yoruba traditions associate morning mist with Oya, the orisha (deity) of winds and atmospheric phenomena, who uses fog to communicate with devotees⁴⁴. Ethiopian highland cultures interpret valley fog as the breath of mountain spirits, with specific rituals performed during foggy seasons to maintain harmony with supernatural forces.

North African and Saharan Perspectives

⁴². Diane Bell, *Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin: A World That Is, Was, and Will Be*. (North Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1998), 74-89.

⁴³. Daniel Merkur, *Powers Which We Do Not Know: The Gods and Spirits of the Inuit*. (Moscow, ID: University of Idaho Press, 1991), 82-101.

⁴⁴. Henry John Drewal, *Yoruba: Nine Centuries of African Art and Thought*. (New York: Center for African Art, 1992), 140-158.

Berber cultures of North Africa developed fog symbolism adapted to Mediterranean coastal and mountain environments. Morning sea fog represents the boundary between the world of the living and the realm of djinn (supernatural beings), requiring protective rituals for safe travel⁴⁵. Saharan cultures interpret rare fog phenomena as particularly powerful spiritual events, often associated with prophetic visions or divine interventions.

5. South Asian Cultural Traditions

This section explores the cultural significance of "fog" and "mist" in South Asian cultural traditions.

Hindu and Buddhist Symbolism

Hindu philosophy uses fog and mist as metaphors for maya (illusion) and the veil that obscures true spiritual understanding. The Bhagavad Gita employs fog imagery to describe the gradual lifting of ignorance through spiritual practice⁴⁶. Buddhist traditions, particularly in Tibetan contexts, view mountain mist as representing the intermediate state between life and death, with fog meditation practices designed to prepare practitioners for bardo experiences.

Regional Folk Traditions

Indian regional cultures developed diverse fog interpretations reflecting local environmental conditions. Bengali traditions associate winter fog with romantic longing and the temporary separation of lovers, themes prominent in classical Bengali poetry⁴⁷. Himalayan cultures view high-altitude fog as the presence of mountain deities, with specific offerings made during foggy periods to ensure safe passage through mountain terrain.

⁴⁵. Michael Brett and Elizabeth Fentress, *The Berbers*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 18-36.

⁴⁶. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Bhagavadgita*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1948), 258-276.

⁴⁷. Simanti Sen, *Travels to Europe: Self and Other in Bengali Travel Narratives, 1870–1910*. (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2009), 92-114.

6. Latin American Cultural Perspectives

This section explores the cultural perspectives on "fog" and "mist" in Latin American traditions.

Pre-Columbian Traditions

Andean cultures developed sophisticated fog symbolism connected to mountain worship and agricultural cycles. Inca traditions associated fog with the breath of mountain spirits (apu), with morning mist indicating favourable conditions for agricultural activities⁴⁸. Maya cultures of lowland regions interpreted fog as communication from rain gods, with fog patterns providing agricultural timing and ceremonial guidance.

Contemporary Indigenous Perspectives

Modern Amazonian cultures maintain traditional fog interpretations despite external cultural pressures. Shipibo traditions view river fog as the pathway used by plant spirits during ayahuasca ceremonies, while Yanomami cultures associate forest fog with the presence of deceased shamans continuing their spiritual work⁴⁹.

Fog and Mist Terminology and Meanings in Arabic Language

The Arabic language possesses a sophisticated and nuanced vocabulary for atmospheric phenomena, including fog and mist. This rich terminology reflects not only the linguistic complexity of Arabic but also the cultural and environmental significance of weather patterns in Arab societies, from desert regions to coastal areas and mountainous terrain. Understanding fog and mist terminology in Arabic provides insights into meteorological knowledge, poetic traditions, religious symbolism, and regional variations across the Arabic-speaking world.

1. Primary Arabic Terms for Fog and Mist

This section examines the primary Arabic terms used to describe fog and mist.

⁴⁸. Gary Urton, *At the Crossroads of the Earth and the Sky*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981),84-109.

⁴⁹. Janet M. Chernela, *The Wanano Indians of the Brazilian Amazon*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993),131-149.

ضباب (Dabab) - Dense Fog

The most common and comprehensive Arabic term for fog is "ضباب" (dabab), derived from the trilateral root ض-ب-ب (d-b-b), which relates to covering, concealing, or enveloping⁵⁰. This etymology perfectly captures the visual and experiential nature of fog as a phenomenon that obscures vision and envelops landscapes. The term appears extensively in classical Arabic literature and continues as the standard Modern Standard Arabic word for fog.

شيرة (Shaburah) - Light Mist or Haze

Arabic uses "شيرة" (shaburah) to describe light mist, haze, or thin fog formations that do not completely obscure visibility. This term derives from the root ش-ب-ر (sh-b-r), related to sprinkling or light distribution⁵¹. The word carries connotations of delicate atmospheric moisture, distinguishing it from the denser formations described by "dabab."

غباش (Ghabash) - Dawn Mist or Twilight Haze

The term "غباش" (ghabash) specifically refers to the mist or haze that appears during dawn or twilight hours. Derived from the root غ-ب-ش (gh-b-sh), meaning to become dim or dusky, this word captures both the temporal specificity and visual quality of atmospheric moisture during transitional light conditions⁵².

ندى (Nada) - Dew and Light Mist

While primarily meaning dew, "ندى" (nada) also extends to describe very light mist formations, particularly those that deposit moisture on surfaces. The semantic connection between dew and mist reflects Arabic

⁵⁰. Muhammad Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab* [The Tongue of the Arabs]. (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1994. Originally published 1290), 540-543.

⁵¹. Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*. (London: Williams & Norgate, 1863), 5:1774-75 (s.v. "ḍabāb"), 6:2230-32 (s.v. "ghabash"), 6:2281-83 (s.v. "ghaym").

⁵². Muhammad Murtada Al-Zabidi, *Taj al-'arus min jawahir al-qamus* [The Crown of the Bride from the Jewels of the Dictionary]. (Kuwait: Kuwait Government Press, 1965. Originally published 1790), 17-18:310-315.

speakers' observation of related atmospheric moisture phenomena and their practical effects on the environment.

2. Regional and Dialectal Variations

This section explores the regional and dialectal variations in the Arabic terminology for fog and mist.

Gulf Arabic Terminology

Gulf Arabic dialects developed specialized fog terminology reflecting coastal and desert environmental conditions. "هباب" (hubab) describes dust-laden fog or haze common in desert regions, while "شُبُورَة بحرية" (shaburah bahriyyah) specifically denotes sea fog affecting coastal areas⁵³. The precision of Gulf terminology reflects the critical importance of visibility for maritime activities and desert travel.

Levantine Arabic Variations

Levantine Arabic employs "ضبابية" (dababah) as a diminutive form of "dabab," often describing localized or temporary fog formations. Syrian and Lebanese dialects use "عجاج" (ajaj) for dust-mixed atmospheric obscuration, while Palestinian Arabic distinguishes "ضباب الصباح" (dabab as-sabah) for morning fog from "ضباب الليل" (dabab al-layl) for night fog, showing temporal specificity in regional usage.

Egyptian Arabic Specializations

Egyptian Arabic employs "شُبُورَة مائية" (shaburah ma'iyyah) for water fog and "عجاج ترابي" (ajaj turabi) for dust haze, reflecting the Nile Delta's diverse atmospheric conditions. The dialect also uses "ضباب النيل" (dabab an-nil) specifically for river fog formations affecting navigation and agriculture along the Nile River.

3. Classical Arabic Literature and Poetry

This section examines the portrayal of fog and mist in Classical Arabic literature and poetry.

⁵³. Clive Holes, *Dialect, Culture, and Society in Eastern Arabia*. (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 214-232.

Pre-Islamic Poetry

Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry (al-shi'r al-jahili) developed sophisticated fog imagery reflecting Bedouin environmental observation and aesthetic sensibility. The poet Imru' al-Qays used "كالضباب المنتشر" (ka-ad-dabab al-muntashir) meaning "like spreading fog" to describe the distribution of tribal camps across desert landscapes⁵⁴. These early poetic uses established fog as a metaphor for dispersion, concealment, and temporary phenomena.

Abbasid Literary Developments

Abbasid period poetry expanded fog symbolism into complex literary devices. Al-Mutanabbi employed fog metaphors to describe the temporary nature of political power and human achievement, with "يزول كالضباب" (yazul ka-ad-dabab) meaning "vanishes like fog" becoming a standard literary expression for transience⁵⁵.

Andalusian Poetic Innovations

Andalusian Arabic poetry developed unique fog imagery reflecting the Iberian Peninsula's diverse climatic conditions. Ibn Zaydun and other Cordoba poets used morning mist metaphors to describe romantic longing and the beauty of beloved figures, with "كالضباب الرقيق" (ka-ad-dabab ar-raqiq) meaning "like delicate fog" becoming a standard comparison for feminine grace.

2. Moving images like fog and mist in the Qur'an

This section examines the imagery associated with fog and mist in the Qur'an, exploring the verses in which these phenomena or comparable atmospheric imagery appear.

1. Covering fog - a symbol of punishment

⁵⁴. Arthur J. Arberry, *The Seven Odes: The First Chapter in Arabic Literature*. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1957), 61-78.

⁵⁵. Stefan Sperl, and Christopher Shackle, eds. *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 41-67.

﴿فَارْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدَّمَ آيَاتٍ مُّفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ﴾⁵⁶

(Then We afflicted them with a great flood and locusts, and the lice, and the frogs, and the blood. All these were distinct signs and yet they remained haughty. They were a wicked people.)

Allah Almighty sent down various types of hardship and natural fog-like hardships on Pharaoh and his people, such as storms, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood, which are terrifying manifestations of nature and a moving picture of Allah's punishment. These signs were a lesson for the rebellious and denying nation. As visually summarized in Figure 1.2.1.

a) Fear of the Storm

The "storm" mentioned in the verse came as a great and violent wind and rain, which surrounded the area, hiding the light and the sun, creating a kind of fog or dim light. This natural scene was like a fog that terrifies people the Fog is the aerial view of this torment, which increases the intensity of fear, suffocation and helplessness.

b) Locusts and Lice: Natural Disasters

Locusts and lice are insects that are harmful to both crops and humans. Their abundant presence, hollowing out the earth and disturbing people, feels like a natural pollution and fog (As shown in Figure 1.2.2), which makes the environment sad and depressing.

c) The Dominance of the Frog

Frogs are ubiquitous creatures, often seen in watery areas. Their individual size is small, but their large numbers appear like a collective fog or cloud, whose presence causes suspicion and anxiety in the environment.

d) Rain of Blood

The rain of blood was a severe and unusual natural sign that descended on these oppressive nations. It was in the form of a sharp

⁵⁶. Al-Qur'an 7:133.

change in the atmosphere, rapidly deteriorating air, and turbulence, which could also take the form of fog or deadly gases.

e) Overall picture: terrifying natural fog

All these signs indicate a coordinated natural emergency, where the ground and the atmosphere are full of various types of fog, bad Odors, rapidly changing weather, and dangerous insects. This fog has a severe negative impact on human life, soil fertility, and the environment, and presents a frightening scene. According to modern science, fog is a cloud near the ground that forms under certain conditions of humidity and temperature. It is part of the meteorological system that sometimes acts as a blessing by providing moisture to crops, and sometimes as a punishment by stopping movement.⁵⁷



Figure 1.2.2: Like a Natural fog

Source

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/06/14/876002404/locusts-are-a-plague-of-biblical-scope-in-2020-why-and-what-are-they-exactly>

⁵⁷. Gultepe, Ismail, Robert Tardif, Silas C. Michaelides, Jan Cermak, Andreas Bott, Jörg Bendix, et al. "Fog Research: A Review of Past Achievements and Future Perspectives." *Pure and Applied Geophysics* 164, no. 6 (2007): 1121-1159.

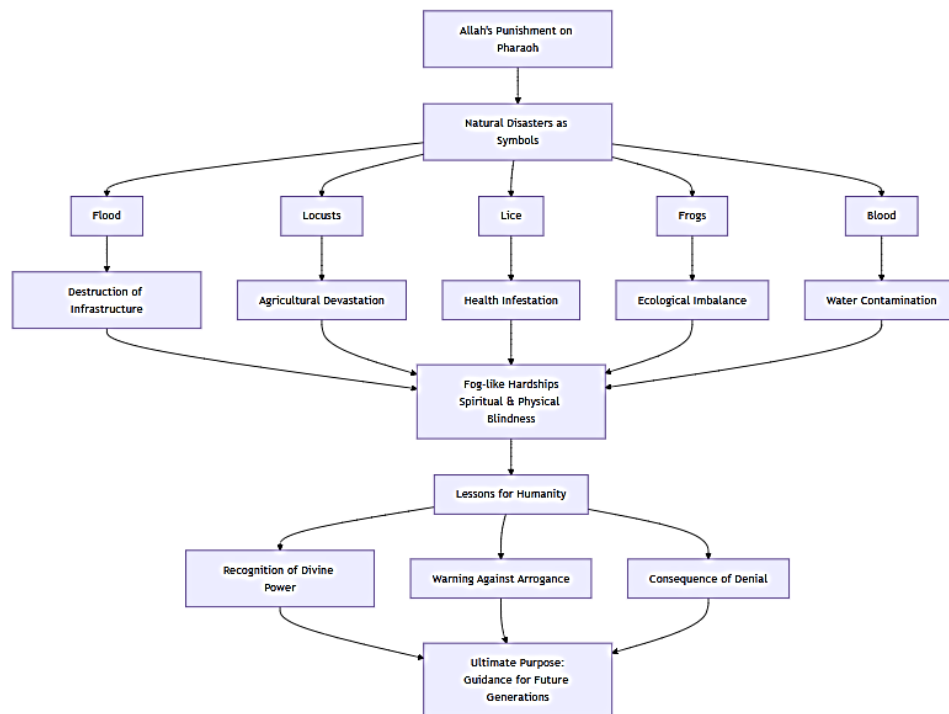


Figure 1.2.1: Al Qur'an 7:133

2. The Transformation of Mist into Water

This section explores the transformation of mist into water within the context of natural processes and Qur'anic reflection on creation.

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَقْلَتِ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا سُقْنَاهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ كَذَٰلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾⁵⁸

(And it is He Who sends forth winds as glad tidings in advance of His Mercy, and when they have carried a heavy-laden cloud, We drive it to a dead land, then We send down rain from it and bring forth therewith fruits of every kind. In this manner do We raise the dead that you may take heed.)

This verse presents a dynamic picture of the natural system of fog and rain (As shown in Figure 1.2.4). Where cold winds come first, then

⁵⁸. Al-Qur'an 7:57.

heavy clouds containing water, move towards the dead land, and bring life to the land through rain. This natural process is a sign of Allah's power and mercy and a source of advice and lesson for humans.

a) The Coming of the Winds

This verse depicts the power of Allah Almighty when cold winds blow in the air before rain and a hazy scene is created. Mist here is a precursor to the descent of divine mercy. That is, it signals the arrival of rain. These winds are often cold and humid, bringing clouds to the lower levels of the sky.

b) Heavy Clouds

These winds are accompanied by heavy clouds that are filled with water, and their weight is so great that their movement is restricted. Heavy clouds form a dense and thick foamy layer in the atmosphere that dims the light and creates a foggy scene.

Mist plays an important role in the formation of "heavy clouds" in the verse. The winds collect moisture, which first appears in the form of fog, then turns into clouds and becomes rain. This is a fundamental step in the Water Cycle, which has been understood in detail by modern science ⁵⁹.

c) The Journey of the Clouds to the Dead Land

These clouds are carried to the dead, dry, and waterless land, where the land is lifeless and still due to the lack of water. This journey of these clouds is a dynamic manifestation of Allah's power that is a precursor to bringing life back to the earth.

d) Rain and the Living Land

The clouds rain and water irrigate the earth, which revives the dead land, all kinds of crops grow, and the continuity of life continues. As explicitly detailed in Figure 1.2.3.

⁵⁹. C. Donald Ahrens, *Meteorology Today: An Introduction to Weather, Climate, and the Environment*. Toronto: Cengage Learning Canada Inc., 2015,164-181.

This scene is a visual sequence: wind → clouds → misty atmosphere → rain → life

This action is also a metaphor for Allah's restoration of life to the dead on the Day of Judgment.



Figure 1.2.4: Natural system of fog and rain

Source: <https://h2oglobalnews.com/the-science-of-fog-harvesting/>

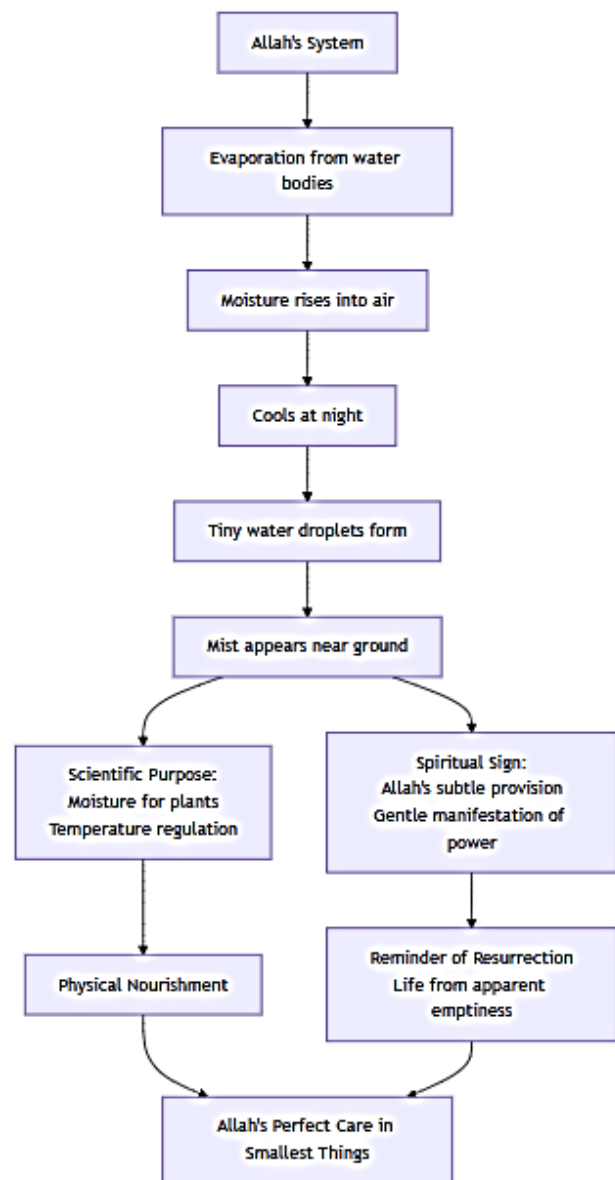


Figure 1.2.3: Al Qur'an 7:57

3. The Scene of the Fog

This section examines the scene of fog as depicted in the Qur'an, exploring its descriptive imagery and contextual significance.

﴿فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُحَانٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾⁶⁰

(So watch for the Day when the sky will come down with a pall of smoke,)

This verse foretells a day when a very clear and powerful smoke will appear from the sky, which will completely envelop the earth. This smoke is both a sign of a great doomsday and a symbol of Allah's punishment, which will have various effects on people, especially for the disbelievers. This smoke is a beautiful combination of a natural scene and a divine sign.

a) Clear Smoke Appearing from the Sky

The verse states that there will come a day when clear or thick smoke will appear from the sky. This smoke will be intense and visible, covering the entire earth. This smoke is called "clear" meaning clear and visible, which will cover everything, taking the form of a large fog or smoke.

b) Historical and Doomsday Interpretations

Some commentators say that this smoke is one of the signs that will come before the Hour, which will remain over the earth for forty days and nights. The effect of this smoke will be less on the believers and more on the hypocrites and disbelievers, because it will make them suffer from colds, pain and intoxication, and sometimes in the form of a severe punishment.

c) Natural and Symbolic Images

Smoke or fog is a natural phenomenon, which becomes a terrifying and secretive curtain between the earth and the sky (As shown in Figure 1.2.6), which is one of the ways of revealing the punishment or signs of Allah Almighty. In the light of modern science, several possible explanations can be offered. One possible explanation is that it will appear in the form of very deep and extensive fog or air pollution, which will cover the entire atmosphere. According to modern research, severe

⁶⁰. Al Qur'an 44:10

air pollution or volcanic ash clouds can create phenomena that completely block sunlight, causing a blurred or even smoky appearance even during the day⁶¹.

Such phenomena can be caused by both natural and human factors. For example, large-scale forest fires (such as those in Australia or the Amazon rainforest) or large volcanic eruptions (such as Krakatoa in 1883) can spread smoke clouds over large parts of the planet, creating a "clear smoke" ⁶². This smoke or fog not only reduces light but also proves to be dangerous for the respiratory system, which can be a form of punishment. This smoke teaches people a lesson and fear and reminds them of Allah's mercy and punishment. As comprehensively mapped in Figure 1.2.5.

d) Spiritual Message

This verse warns people of the punishment of the Hereafter and encourages them to repent and turn to Allah. Smoke or thick fog is a sign of Allah's displeasure, just as these phenomena in the world usually come as a sign of destruction and ruin. This scene shows the power of Allah and the severity of His punishment.

⁶¹. Alan Robock, "Volcanic Eruptions and Climate." Paper presented at the AGU Fall Meeting, San Francisco, CA, December 2012. Abstract U51A-07.

⁶². S. Self, & M. R. Rampino, (1981). The 1883 eruption of Krakatau. *Nature*, 294(5843), 699-704.

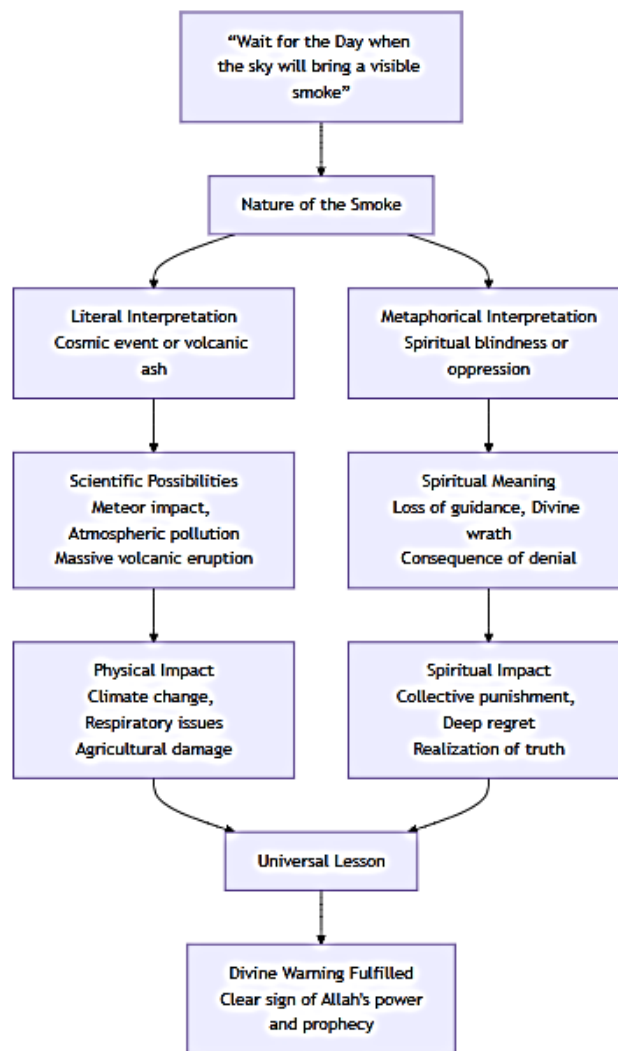


Figure 1.2.5: Al Qur'an 44:10



Figure 1.2.6: Fog is frightening and secretive shutter between the earth and the sky Source: <https://www.dreamstime.com/photos-images/foggy-scene.html>

Conclusion

This research study reveals that fog and mist are not simply described as natural phenomena in the Holy Qur'an, but are presented as symbols of spiritual perception, divine warning, and intellectual veils. Linguistic and lexical research shows that these two words highlight the artistic and spiritual beauty of the Qur'an, where fog and mist become metaphors for the veils that block vision and insight. Scientifically, the phenomena of fog and mist described in the Qur'an are also consistent with modern environmental and physical science, which are a manifestation of the scientific miracle of the Qur'an. Consequently, the imagery of mist and fog in the Qur'an makes man realize that behind the veils of nature lies the sign of the true Creator, and when man removes these veils through contemplation and reflection, the light of divine knowledge appears.

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