

SŪRAH 93
Al-Ḍuḥā
(The Morning Hours)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God, the Lord of Grace, the Ever Merciful.

By the bright morning hours, (1)

and the night when it grows still and dark, (2)

your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor does He hate you. (3)

Surely the life to come will be better for you than this present life. (4)

And, certainly, in time your Lord will be bounteous to you and you will be well pleased. (5)

Has He not found you an orphan and given you a shelter? (6)

And found you in error, and guided you? (7)

And found you poor and enriched you? (8)

Therefore do not wrong the orphan, (9)

وَالضُّحَىٰ ﴿١﴾

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ﴿٢﴾

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ ﴿٣﴾

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٤﴾

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ ﴿٥﴾

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ ﴿٧﴾

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾

nor chide away the beggar, (10)

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾

but speak of your Lord's favours. (11)

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

Overview

This *sūrah*, in subject matter, expression, images, connotations and rhythm provides a touch of tenderness and mercy. It is a message of affection, the touch of a benevolent hand to soothe pain and remove hardship. At the same time, it generates an air of contentment and confident hope.

The *sūrah* is dedicated in its entirety to the Prophet (peace be upon him). It is a message from his Lord which touches his heart with pleasure, joy, tranquillity and contentment. All-in-all, it proffers mercy and compassion to his restless soul and suffering heart.

Several accounts mention that the revelation of the Qur'ān to the Prophet came, at one stage, to a halt and that the angel Gabriel stopped coming to him for a while. The unbelievers therefore said, "Muḥammad's Lord has bidden him farewell!" God therefore revealed this *sūrah*.

Revelation, Gabriel's visits and the link with God were the Prophet's whole equipment along his precarious path. They were his only solace in the face of hard rejection and his sole comfort against outright repudiation. They were the source from which he derived his strength to stand steadfast against the unbelievers who were intent on rebuff and refusal, and on directing a wicked, vile attack against the Prophet's message and the faith he preached.

So when the revelation was withheld, the source of strength for the Prophet was cut off. His life spring was sapped and he longed for his heart's friend. Alone he was left in the wilderness, without sustenance, water, or the accustomed companionship of his beloved friend. It was a situation which heavily taxed human endurance.

Then this *sūrah* was revealed and it came as a river of compassion, mercy, hope, comfort and reassurance. "Your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor does He hate you. Surely the life to come will be better for you than this present life. And, certainly, in time your Lord will be bounteous to you and you will be well pleased." (Verses 3-5) Your Lord has never before left you or rejected you, or even denied you His mercy or protection. "Has He not found you an orphan and given you a shelter? And found you in error, and guided you? And found you poor and enriched you?" (Verses 6-8)

Do you not see the proof of all this in your own life? Do you not feel it in your

heart? Do you not observe it in your world? Most certainly, “*your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor does He hate you.*” (Verse 3) Never was His mercy taken away from you and nor will it be. “*Surely the life to come will be better for you than this present life.*” (Verse 4) And there will be much more: “*And, certainly, in time your Lord will be bounteous to you and you will be well pleased.*” (Verse 5)

This statement, is given in the framework of a universal phenomenon: “*By the bright morning hours, and the night when it grows still and dark.*” (Verses 1-2) The expression spreads an air of affection, kindness and complete satisfaction. “*Your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor does He hate you. Surely the life to come will be better for you than this present life. And, certainly, in time your Lord will be bounteous to you and you will be well pleased. Has He not found you an orphan and given you a shelter? And found you in error, and guided you? And found you poor and enriched you?*” (Verses 3-8) Such tenderness, mercy, satisfaction and solace are all felt in the sweet and soothing words which softly thread along the *sūrah* echoing the morning hours and still night, the times most conducive to clarity. During these periods one’s reflections flow like a stream, and the human soul is best able to communicate with the universe and its Creator. It feels the universe worshipping its Lord and turning towards Him in praise with joy and happiness. In addition, the night is described as growing still and dark. It is not the dark gloomy night as such but the still, clear and tranquil night, covered with a light cloud of sweet longing and kind reflection. It is a picture similar to that of the orphan’s life. More still, the night is cleared away by the crossing morning and thus the colours of the picture beautifully match those of the framework, making for perfect harmony.

The scene drawn here is one of perfect beauty. Such perfection is divine, unparalleled and inimitable.

Unfailing Favours

By the bright morning hours, and the night when it grows still and dark, your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor does He hate you. Surely the life to come will be better for you than this present life. And, certainly, in time your Lord will be bounteous to you and you will be well pleased. (Verses 1-5)

God vows by these two calm and inspiring periods of time and establishes a relationship between natural phenomena and human feelings. Thus, mutual response is encouraged between human hearts and the universe, which is beautiful, alive and sympathetic to all living beings. Hence, hearts live in peace with the world, relaxed and happy.

This mode of expression is particularly appropriate in this *sūrah* as the feeling of

fellowship is stressed here. It is as if the Prophet is being told straightaway that his Lord had already blessed him with the fellowship of the world around him and that he was by no means forsaken or left alone.

Then follows a clear and emphatic assertion: *“Your Lord has neither forsaken you, nor does He hate you.”* (Verse 3) He has not left you, nor has He been harsh to you as is alleged by those who want to afflict your heart and soul. For He is your Lord and you belong to Him. He is your sustainer and protector. God’s favours on you have neither run out nor have they been stopped. You, Muḥammad, are to get much more and better favours in the hereafter than you are getting in this life. *“Surely the life to come will be better for you than this present life.”* (Verse 4)

God is saving for you, Muḥammad, what will satisfy you in your mission and ease your hard path and bring about the victory of your message, vindicating the truth you advocate. These thoughts were in fact preoccupying the Prophet’s mind as he encountered his people’s adamant rejection, ill-treatment, and malice. *“In time, your Lord will be bounteous to you and you will be well pleased.”* (Verse 5)

The *sūrah* then goes on to remind the Prophet of his Lord’s attitude towards him from the very beginning of his mission so that he can reflect on how favourably God treats him. This to make him recall the happy memories of divine kindness: *“Has He not found you an orphan and given you a shelter? And found you in error, and guided you? And found you poor and enriched you?”* (Verses 6-8) Reflect on your present life and on your past. Has He ever forsaken you or hated you even before He charged you with prophethood?

You were born an orphan but God protected you. He made so many people kind to you, especially your uncle Abū Ṭālib, though he followed a religion different from yours. You were poor and He made your heart rich with contentment, and made you rich through your business gains and wife’s wealth, so that you would not suffer from poverty or yearn for the riches that abound all around you.

You were also brought up in an ignorant society, full of confused beliefs and concepts, where erring ways and practices abounded. You did not like those beliefs, concepts and practices but you could not find a clear and suitable way out. You could find your way neither in the world of *jāhiliyyah*, nor with the followers of Moses and Jesus who adulterated their beliefs, distorted their original form and went astray. But God has guided you through His revelations and the way of life He has laid down, establishing a firm bond between Him and you.

This guidance in the wilderness of disbelief and confusion is the greatest favour of them all. The happiness and reassurance it brings about cannot be matched. The Prophet had been greatly perturbed and afflicted because of the cessation of revelation, and the malicious attitude of the unbelievers during the period of its

cessation. Hence comes this reminder to put his heart at ease and to reassure him of his Lord's promise that he will never be abandoned.

God takes the opportunity of mentioning the Prophet's earlier orphanhood, error and poverty in order to instruct him, and all Muslims, to protect every orphan, be charitable to every beggar, and to speak of the great favours God has bestowed on them. The first and most important of these is having been guided to Islam. *"Therefore do not wrong the orphan, nor chide away the beggar, but speak of your Lord's favours."* (Verses 9-11)

As we have frequently mentioned, these instructions reflect the needs of the day, in that greedy and materialistic society in which the weak, who could not defend their own rights, were not catered for. Islam came to reform that society with God's laws which establish equity, justice and goodwill. Speaking of God's bounties, especially those of guidance and faith, expresses gratitude to Him who has given us all that we have. It is the recipient's practical manifestation of thanks.