

Surah Duha, Chapter 93

(The Glorious Morning Light)

Number of Verses: 11

[The Contents of Surah Duha](#)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

This Surah, which is one of the Meccan Suras, according to some narrations, was revealed after a brief interval that happened in revelation and the holy Prophet (S) was anxiously awaiting its arrival because the enemies had become obnoxious and began to gossip. Then, the verses descended on him, like refreshing rain and gave him a new strength, which ceased his enemies taunts.

This Surah begins with two oaths and then informs the holy Prophet (S) of the good news that Allah has never forsaken him nor left him alone.

It adds that, soon, Allah will provide for him so abundantly that he will become content.

And in the last verses of the Surah, He reminds the Prophet (S) of his past life to illustrate how Allah has always bestowed His loving care on him and in the most difficult moments has supported him in the past and so his future was sure.

That is why, at the end of the Surah. He bids him, (in appreciation of the very great bounties) to be kind with the orphans and the needy, thus:

"Therefore treat not the orphans with harshness,"

"And for the one who asks, repulse not,"

"And as for the bounties of your Lord, do announce (it)".

The Virtue in Studying this Surah

For the virtue of this Surah it is enough to say that there is a tradition narrated from the holy Prophet (S) which says:

"He who recites this Surah will be among those Allah is pleased with; and it is possible that Muhammad (S) intercedes for him, and he will be rewarded ten 'good deeds' for each orphan or needy (or petitioner)". 1

All of these virtues are for the believer who recites the Surah and acts upon it.

It is noteworthy that according to many narrations this Surah and the next one, Inshirah are together one Surah; and since in prayers we should recite a complete Surah after Surah Al-Hamd; then, in reciting this Surah the next one should be added, too.

(A similar idea has been given for Surah al-Fil and Surah Quraish)

And if we think carefully of the contents of these two Suras, we can see the close relation of their subjects and find that they are certainly together, even though the invocation:

'In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful'

separates them into two Suras.

We should refer to the books of religious jurisprudence to answer questions such as: 'Are these two Suras the same in every respect' or, 'should we consider them as one Surah in prayers?'. In any case, the consensus of scholars agrees that, in prayers, we cannot recite merely one of the two Suras.

Surah Duha, Verses 1-5

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

وَالضُّحٰی

وَاللَّیْلِ اِذَا سَجٰی

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلٰی

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى

1. ***“By the Glorious Morning Light,”***
2. ***“And by the Night when it is still,***
3. ***“Your Lord has neither forsaken you nor has He become displeased.”***
4. ***“And surely the hereafter will be better for you than the present (life).”***
5. ***“And soon your lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased.”***

The Occasion of Revelation

Many narrations have been cited about the occasion of revelation of this Surah, of which the following is the most clear:

Ibn-Abbas says that fifteen days had passed since the Prophet (S) had received any revelation. During this time, the pagans of Mecca taunted Muhammad and said that his Lord had forsaken him and was displeased with him. They added that if he had been right about his divine mission, the revelation would not have ceased for him. Then, the aforementioned Surah descended (and put an end to their statements).

It is noteworthy that when this Surah was revealed, according to a tradition, the holy Prophet (S) told Gabriel:

“You delayed while I was looking forward to seeing you.”

And then Gabriel answered him:

“I was more eager than you, but I am a missionary servant and do not descend unless by my Lord's leave.”

Another tradition cites that a number of Jews came to the Prophet (S) and asked him some questions about the stories of Zul-qarnain, the men of the cave, and the creation of the Spirit.

He told them that he would inform them the next day, but he did not add to his statement:

“If Allah wills”.

This caused the inspiration to cease for a length of time and consequently, the enemies began talking and jarring at him. Hence, the Prophet (S) felt sad and lonely, but later this Surah was revealed to comfort him.

(This occasion of revelation does not seem so fitting since the Jews and their meeting with the Prophet (S), as well as these kinds of questions, usually occurred in Medina, not Mecca).

There is no agreement in narrations as to the exact length of time he had to wait, when the moments of inspiration were stilled. Some have cited it as 12 days, some 15 days, some 19 days, some 25 days and some forty days. Some narrations also denote that it was only for 2–3 days.

The Prophet promised to be blessed to his heart's content.

At the beginning of the Surah, again, we are faced with two oaths sworn to the Light and sworn to the Night, saying:

"By the Glorious Morning Light".

"And by the Night when it is still".

The term /duha/ means the beginning hours of the day when the sun rises high in the sky and it brightens up everywhere. This is, in fact, the best time of day or, in other words, it is the youth of the day. At this time of day, in summer, the heat of the sun is not so tormenting, and in winter, it has defeated the coolness of the weather, and it is at this time that we are, both bodily and spiritually, full of energy ready to do whatever we need to do.

The term /saja/ is derived from /sajw/ and originally means 'to be quiet, tranquil'; and it has also been used with the meaning of 'to cover, to darken' but, here it confers the meaning of 'quietness' and 'tranquility', hence, on the nights when the wind does not blow the terms; laylatun- sajiyah; 'a quiet night', and for the sea, with the lack of any storm and roaring waves, the term /bahrun saj/ 'the quiet sea' are used in the Arabic language.

In any case what is important about 'night' is its peace and stillness which naturally gives tranquility to Man's nerves and makes him prepared for his next day's struggles or days of spiritual life and work. From this point of view 'night' is very important and it deserves to be sworn to.

There is a close similarity and relationship between these two oaths and their contents. The 'Glorious Light' of the day is, metaphorically, the descent of the revelations to the holy heart of the Prophet (S), and the stillness or quiescence of the night is compared to the days and periods of waiting for revelation, which is sometimes necessary in some cases.

Then, following these two great oaths, it refers to the conclusion and the response of the oaths and says:

"Your Lord has neither forsaken you nor has He become displeased".

The term /wadda'a/ is derived from /taudi/ which means 'to leave'. The term /qala/ is based on /qila/ in the sense of 'hate and enmity', and is derived from the root /qalw/ meaning 'to throw'.

Raqib believes that these two refer to one thing, because when one hates another it is as if he throws his heart away and does not accept it back.

In any event, in this verse, there is particular assurance given to the holy Prophet (S), for him to know that if after inspiration there were days and periods of waiting, it was due to valid reasons as which only Allah knew, but He would never be angry with him nor forsake him as the taunts of his enemies suggested Allah's Care and Mercy are always around him and supporting him.

Then, it continues by saying:

"And surely the hereafter will be better for you than the present (life)."

O Prophet! You are under His care and Mercy, here in this world and you will be in a better condition in the Hereafter. He will not be displeased with you either in this fleeting world or in the next eternal world. Briefly speaking, you are dear in the present world and dearer in the Hereafter.

Some commentators have said that the words /axirat/ and /ula / refer to the first and the last parts of the Prophet's life, they believe the verse means: 'O, Prophet you will be more successful in the last part of your life than at the first'; that which refers to the expansion and development of Islam when the Muslims were frequently victorious in battles against their enemies, which occurred one after another, and the light of Islam removed the gloom of paganism and idolatry in many areas.

To combine these two commentaries is also possible.

And, finally, He has given him the highest glad tidings where it says:

"And soon your Lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased,"

This is a very high respect and honour from Allah to His devoted servant, Muhammad (S), when He states:

'Your Lord will grant you so much so that you shall be well-pleased';

That is, in this world he will win over his enemies and Islam will spread all over the world, and in the Next World, he will be granted the greatest rewards.

Undoubtedly, the holy Prophet (S), as the last Prophet and guide of all Mankind is not content with his own salvation alone; certainly he will be pleased and satisfied when his intercession for his followers is accepted, too. For the same reason it is understood from some narrations that this verse is one of the most optimistic verses of the Holy Qur'an and is also, an evidence that his intercession will be accepted.

There is a tradition from Imam Baqir (as) from his father Imam Zayn-al-'abidin (as) from his uncle Muhammad-ibn-Hanafiyah, from his father Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) which says that the Messenger of Allah (S) said:

"On doomsday, I will stay in the state of intercession and intercede for the sinners of my community so much so that Allah will say:

'Did you become satisfied, O Muhammad?'

and twice I will reply in the affirmative."

Then, Amir-al-Mo'mineen Ali (as) addressed a group of the citizens of Kufa (a city in Iraq) and added:

"Do you believe that the most hopeful verse of the Holy Qur'an is the verse:

'Say: O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah...'²?

The group responded that they did indeed believe it.

Then he said:

"But we, the Household of the Prophet (Ahl-ul-Bait) say that the most hopeful verse of the Holy Qur'an is thus:

'And soon your Lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased''³.

Needless to say, the intercession of the Prophet (S) demands some conditions. He will not intercede for just anyone nor can any sinful person have such an expectation.

Another tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"The Messenger of Allah entered Fatima's home when she, wearing rough clothes of camel wool, was grinding grain with one hand and nursing her child with the other.

He, having tears in his eyes, advised his daughter to tolerate the hardship and the bitterness of this world for the sweetness of the Next World, because Allah had revealed to him

'And soon your Lord will grant you, and you shall be well-pleased''⁴.

Explanation: The Philosophy Behind the Discontinuation of the Revelations

Looking at the aforementioned verses, altogether, it is well understood that the Prophet (S) was not absolutely free and all that he had were from Allah, even the revelation; there can be a pause in descending revelation whenever Allah wills and it continues to be descended when He wills.

Maybe the pause happened in order to be an answer to those who wanted the Prophet (S) to bring them miracles extemporarily according to their definite wishes or to change some creeds or some verses. However, he would answer that it was not for him, of his own accord, to change them⁵.

Surah Duha, Verses 6–11

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ

6. ***"Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered (you)?"***
7. ***"And He found you wandering and guided (you)."***
8. ***"And He found you in need and made you free of need."***
9. ***"Therefore treat not the orphans with harshness,"***
10. ***"And for the one who asks, repulse not,"***
11. ***"And as for the Bounties of your Lord, do proclaim (it)."***

As a Sign of Gratitude for the Bounties of Your Lord

As we mentioned before, the Surah mostly tends to comfort the Prophet (S) and enumerates the Divine graces granted to him.

Then, in relation to the former verses containing this very meaning, the following verses begin by mentioning three particular blessings of Allah's Bounties to the holy Prophet (S); and along with them it gives him three important instructions:

"Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered (you)?"

'(O' Muhammad) you were in your mother's womb when your father, 'Abdullah, died. I caused you to be raised in the lap of your grandfather ('Abdul-Muttalib).'

'You were six years old when your mother died and you from this point of view became lonely but! I increased the love for you in the heart of your uncle (Abu-Talib).'

'You were eight years old when your grandfather, 'Abdul-Muttalib, died'.

'I appointed your uncle to serve you and support you and he showered you with love and care in protecting you'.

'Yes, you were an orphan and I sheltered you'.

Some commentators have cited many other meanings about this verse that are not compatible with its appearance. For example, the meaning of orphan, here is said to be a person who is unique in grace and holiness just as a unique piece of jewellery is called 'an orphan jewel'. According to this idea the meaning of this verse would be, 'Allah found you unique in grace and honour, therefore, He selected you and gave you the prophethood'.

Another meaning is that: 'You, yourself, were an orphan one day but We selected you to be a protector of orphans and a leader for mankind'.

Without doubt, the first interpretation is the most appropriate in every respect and is more harmonious with the content of the verse.

Then, attention is paid to the second blessing and says:

"And He found you wandering and guided (you)",

'Yes, you were not acquainted with prophecy at all and it was Us Who enlightened your heart with a Light by which you could guide Mankind'; as, in another occasion it says:

"...Thou knewest not (before) what was Revelation, and what was Faith, but We have made the (Qur'an) a Light, wherewith We guide such of Our servants as We will..."⁶

It is clear that before receiving his prophetic mission, the holy Prophet (S) lacked this Divine emanation. Allah helped him and guided him, as Surah Yusuf. No 12, Verse 3 says:

"We do relate unto thee the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to thee this (portion of) Qur'an: before this, thou too were among those who knew it not."

Surely if Allah had not helped the Prophet (S) with His hidden assistance in guiding him, he would have never succeeded on the path to his goals.

Therefore, the term

lqalalat/ 'aberration',

here does not mean 'the absence of faith, monotheism, piety and virtue', but referring to (the above verses and according to the statements of many commentators, it means 'unacquaintance with the secrets of prophecy, the laws of Islam and similar facts, but, later and after being appointed to the prophetic mission, the Prophet (S) learned them all with Allah's help and guidance.

In Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 282 when stating the philosophy of severalty of witnesses for writing loan documents involving future payment, it says:

"...so that if one of them errs, the other can remind..."

In this verse the term /qalalat/ is used only with the sense of forgetfulness with reference to the phrase

/fathakkir/ 'then remind'.

There are additional commentaries given on the verse. For example, it means that 'you were unknown and Allah bestowed on you so many gifts of His blessings that you became quite well-known everywhere'.

Or, you were lost several times:

Once in the valleys of Mecca when you were supported by Abdul-Muttalib.

Another time when your nursing period had finished and your foster mother, Halimah Saidiyah, was taking you to Mecca to give you to Abdul-Muttalib, then you became lost on the way and the third time when your uncle was going to Sham (Syria) in a caravan and you were with him, and you lost the way in the dark of night Allah guided you, on all occasions, and led you either to your loving grandfather or uncle'.

It is worthy to note that the term /qall/, from the point of terminology has two shades of meaning: 'lost' and 'misled'.

For instance, it is said: 'knowledge is the lost item of a believer' (meaning that a believer is always searching for more knowledge), and thus, it is also used with the meaning of 'hidden' and 'absent', as:

"...What! When we lie, hidden and lost, in the earth, shall we indeed be in a Creation renewed?"⁷

If the word /dall / mentioned in the verse under discussion, is used with the meaning of 'lost', or if it means 'misled or astray', the purpose is that the path of prophecy was out of his reach before his appointment or in other words the Prophet (S) had nothing from his own and what he had was from Allah. Thus, there will be no problem in using either term.

Then, referring to the third blessing, it says:

'And He found you in need and made you free of need'

'Allah attracted the attention to you of that sincere pious lady Khadijah, so she could give you all her wealth to use for your great and holy aims on the way of Islam. And, later, at the time of the glory of Islam. He paved the way for you to reach abundant riches through wars, enabling you to become independent in attaining your great goals. '

On commenting about these verses, there is a tradition from Imam Ali-ibnMusa-ar-Riza (S) who said:

*'Did He not find you an orphan or a unique person among His creatures and sheltered people with you; and He found you wandering or unknown among the people who did not know your greatness and then He led them to you; and He found you as a custodian for them from the point of knowledge and made them free of need by you.'*⁸

This tradition, of course, refers to the hidden meaning of the verse, otherwise the outward appearance of it is the very same that was said in the above.

We should never think that by making the above comments, which are understood from the appearance of the verses, that it would decrease the high value of the Prophet (S), or that it is a negative idea from Allah about Muhammad (S). On the contrary, it is indeed the statement of His grace and respect towards the holy Prophet (S) which refreshes his great soul.

With the conclusion of the previous verses, the next verses command the Prophet (S) with three important instructions. Although they are directly addressing Muhammad (S), they are surely applied to everyone.

At first, it says:

“Therefore, treat not the orphans with harshness”,

The term /taqhar/ is based on /qahr /and as Raqib cites in his book, Mufradat, it means 'prevalence with contempt'. But, the term is used with either of these two senses, separately, and here 'contempt' seems to be more fitting.

This shows that in relation to orphans, even though feeding and donating are considered highly commendable actions, it is more important to respect them and to be kind and spiritually helpful to them, or to satisfy their emotional needs.

That is why it is narrated in a tradition from the Prophet (S) that he said:

"He who touches an orphans' head, affectionately, Allah will bestow on him as many rays (of blessings) on the Day of Final Judgement, as the number of the orphans' hair which touch under the person's hand".

It seems as if Allah is telling the Prophet (S) that 'you, yourself, have been an orphan and suffered from

the pain of orphanhood. Now, be careful of the orphans with all your heart and treat them with tender affection and respect, and quench their thirsty souls with kindness¹.

In the next verse another command is presented:

"And for the one who asks, repulse not",

The term /tanhar/ is derived from the root /nahara/ which means 'to repulse' or 'to repel by discourtesy or coldness', and it is not improbable that its root is the same as the term /nahr/ with the meaning of 'the running stream', since it flows with violence.

In order to specify who is meant by the term /sa'il/ 'petitioner', there are several commentaries which have been put forth. It could mean:

1. Those who have some questions on scientific, religious and theological matters. This, as a subdivision, is understood from the verse:

"And He found you wandering and guided (you)".

'Then you too spread this divine guidance and tried to guide the needy and did not repulse any petitioner¹.

2. Those who are in need of finance and come to you, help them and do not make them feel hopeless by repelling them.

3. Those who are poor in both knowledge and finances. Allah orders Muhammad (S) to respond positively to those who make a request of any type. This idea is fitting both with divine guidance to the Prophet (S) and sheltering him when he was an orphan.

Strangely enough, some commentators, in order to prove that the term

/sa'il/ 'petitioner',

here means only 'a petitioner who is asking for knowledge', have said that the term has never been used in the Holy Qur'an with the sense of financial help¹.[9](#)

But, it has frequently appeared in the Qur'an with this meaning, such as Surah Zariyat, No. 51, verse 19:

"And in their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy) him who asked, and him who (for some reason) was prevented (from asking)".

Also from Surah Ma'arij, No. 70, verse 177 and Surah Baqarah, No. 2, verse 177 are other examples containing this idea.

Finally, in the third and last command, it says:

"And ask for the Bounties, of your Lord, do proclaim (it)".

Announcing the bounties is sometimes done by statements, containing thankfulness and gratitude and that is far from pride and haughtiness, and sometimes by action through donation and charity from those bounties, on the path of Allah, in a way that shows He has given him much Bounty.

This is the style of generous noble people that when a blessing befalls them they proclaim it and thank Allah and their behavior also confirms and reinforces this fact. On the contrary, the jealous, begrudging, miserly persons groan and moan all the time and even if they were to get the whole world they would insist on covering over the favours; their appearance is poor, their statements are full of weeping and complaining; and their actions illustrate poverty too.

This is when the holy Prophet (S) is reported to have said:

"When Allah gives a servant a bounty, it pleases Him to see the signs of the bounty on him."[10](#)

Therefore, the concluding meaning of the verse is that in appreciation of the fact that Allah made you free of need, bountifully, when you were in need; your duty is that you should make that Divine Bounty spread far and wide and proclaim it and share it by speech and action.

But, some commentators have said that

'bounty',

here means only spiritual bounties, such as, prophethood and the Holy Qur'an which the Prophet (S) was called to announce and spread. And this is the meaning of 'announcing the Bounty'.

It is, also, probable that it applies to all material and spiritual bounties.

So, on commenting on this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) is narrated to have said:

"Announce them all, whatever Allah has endowed to you, from merits, sustenance, goodness, and guidance". [11](#)

Another tradition from the holy Prophet (S), as a general admonition, says:

"He who is endowed a blessing and it is not seen on him, is called an enemy of Allah and an opponent to His Bounties". [12](#)

We conclude this subject with a tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) who is reported to have said:

"Surely Allah, the Most Bountiful, likes bounties; and also likes to see the signs of His bounties on His servants." [13](#)

Supplication

O Lord! Your Bounties are beyond what can be announced. Do not restrain them from us, and increase them with your generosity.

O Lord! We are encompassed by your grace in this world. We hope for the same in the Next World.

O Lord! Help us to be always the advocators of the deprived and the supporters of the rights of the orphans.

- [1.](#) Majma –al–Bayan– vol. 10, p. 503.
- [2.](#) Surah Zumar, No. 39, verse 53
- [3.](#) Abul–Futuh Razi, vol. 12, p. 110.
- [4.](#) Majma'–al–Bayan, vol. 10, p. 55.
- [5.](#) as Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 15 avows
- [6.](#) Surah Shura, No. 42, Verse 52
- [7.](#) Surah Sajdah, No. 32, verse 10
- [8.](#) Majma'–al–Bayan, vol. 10, p. 506.
- [9.](#) Ab–duh Commentary. 'Amma. p. 111
- [10.](#) Nahj–ul–Fisahah, Tradition 686.
- [11.](#) Majma–'al–Bayan, vol, 10, p, 507,
- [12.](#) Tafsir–i–Qurtabi, vol, 10, p. 7192. A similar meaning is found in al–Kafi, vol, 6, Tradition 2.
- [13.](#) Furu'–i–Kafi. vol. 6, p. 438.

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