

Surah al-Dḥḥ̣>(93)

‘The Forenoon’

سورة الضحى

This surah derives its name from the prominence of the word *dḥḥ̣>* meaning ‘the forenoon’. Like the other Makkan surahs it deals with matters of faith, with special attention to the subject of the Messenger, *may Allah bless him and his family*. Whereas Surah al-Layl concluded on the theme of the virtuous being granted full satisfaction, this surah concentrates on the satisfaction of Allah towards the Messenger, and his wage and reward.

By the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Beginning *by the name of Allah ...* who is the essence comprising all the qualities of perfection.

The Compassionate, the Merciful, who mercifully meets the servants' deficiencies and forgives their sins.

By the forenoon, (1)

وَالضُّحَىٰ ﴿١﴾

An oath by the spread of morning, that is by the time when the sun's rising in the sky reaches the point when its light is widespread.

By the night when it is still, (2)

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ﴿٢﴾

That is, when the night is settled and its darkness is established.

Thy Lord has not bid thee farewell, nor is He angry, (3)

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ ﴿٣﴾

That is, revelation and Messengership consciousness have not departed from you, O Messenger of Allah, in the way that a person bids farewell to a departing friend. Nor is He angry with you.

It is narrated from Imam al-Baqir, *peace be upon him*, that after the revelation of the surah, 'Recite, in the name of thy Lord, who created ...', archangel Gabriel came with no further revelation for quite some time. So the Messenger's wife Khadijah said that perhaps his Lord had stopped sending him any more; and then Allah revealed the verse 'Thy Lord has not bid thee farewell, nor is he angry'.

And indeed the afterlife is better for thee than the former, (4)

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٤﴾

The hereafter is certainly better for the Messenger than the world, for much goodness had been prepared there for the Messenger; so how could Allah forsake him and be angry with him when the affair was only partly accomplished?

And thy Lord shall soon grant thee, so thou shall be content. (5)

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ ﴿٥﴾

The Messenger is granted in the hereafter all that will content him, due to the Divine bounty and beneficence. And amongst what Allah will grant him, is the authority of intercession.

The surah then turns to list God's prior favours to him, emphasising the point that he is at the half-way stage between the former favours and those to come; so how could God be angry with him?:

Did He not find thee an orphan, so sheltered? (6)

أَلَمْ تَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾

That is, did he not find thee, O Messenger of Allah, an orphan, and did he not shelter thee? For the Messenger's father died before his birth, and He was raised by his clan and tribe, with love and consideration, at a time when orphans were generally considered despicable by the Arabs.

And found thee alone, so guided? (7)

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ ﴿٧﴾

The address is to the Messenger. 'alone' is put for *dhālan*, literally meaning astray, in the sense here of being away from the path of everyone else. The meaning is that the Messenger was isolated amongst his contemporaries, like a precious object wasting in the barren desert. Thus Allah guided the masses to the Messenger and he thereby was no longer lonely.

So guided: Allah guided humankind to the messenger, and so took them from barbarism and individualism, to that to which otherwise humankind would not have been guided.

And found thee needy, so enriched? (8)

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾

The Messenger was poor, without property. Allah enriched him, with the property of his wife Khadijah, *peace be on her*, and other property.

As the Messenger had tasted the experience of being an orphan, isolated and poor, he was to have empathy for the troubled, and was to give to those in distress:

So as for the orphan, oppress not, (9)

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾

The orphan should not be made uneasy, and not wronged. The Messenger is addressed in this verse though it is clear he was free from such errors, for these laws apply to him as they apply to all others as well as him.

And as for the asker, rebuff not, (10)

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾

'Asker' is put for *sa'il*, meaning a person who asks for help, and who is poor and suchlike. He should not be put off rudely, but rather given something, or be given a warm, polite refusal.

*And as for the blessing of thy Lord, proclaim.
(11)*

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

By 'blessing' (*nīmah*) is meant the species of blessing, i.e. all blessings. And amongst the greatest of blessings is guidance.

... **proclaim** means report to humankind, so that His bounty, glory be to Him, becomes clear to them. This, in addition to gratitude, teaches humankind not to hide their blessings, as has become the habit of many, who list the shortages of their lives but do not remember the Divine blessings upon them.