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Surah Ad-Duha

The Morning Hours · Makki · 11 ayat — reflections on
surah 93 of the Qur'an

QURAN

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Surah Ad-Duha

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الضحى — Ad-Duha, "The Morning Hours". Surah 93 of 114, revealed in Makkah, 11 ayat. The full text and a recitation are on the web edition at deen2u.com/quran/93/.

ONE

The surah in brief

A tender reassurance to the Prophet in a moment of silence, swearing that his Lord has neither forsaken nor hated him; the future is better than the past, so recalling Allah's past care he should shelter the orphan, help the beggar, and proclaim His blessings.

Ad-Duha was revealed to console the Prophet during a pause in revelation, when enemies taunted that his Lord had abandoned him. It swears by the morning brightness and the stilled night to reassure him: your Lord has not forsaken you nor grown to hate you, and what is to come is better for you than what has passed, and He will keep giving until you are content. It then recalls three past mercies as proof, He found you an orphan and sheltered you, found you unaware and guided you, found you in need and enriched you, and turns each into a duty: so do not oppress the orphan, do not repel the one who asks, and proclaim the favor of your Lord. Tenderness and gratitude run through the whole surah.

OCCASIONS OF REVELATION

Why it was revealed

These are the occasions (asbāb al-nuzūl) that the authentic collections narrate for verses of this surah. An occasion explains a verse; it does not limit its meaning.

Qur'an 93:1-3

The Prophet was ill and did not pray at night for two or three nights. A woman (the wife of Abu Lahab) taunted him that his Satan had forsaken him, and Allah revealed "By the forenoon... your Lord has neither forsaken you nor hated you."

"O Muhammad! I think that your Satan has forsaken you, for I have not seen him with you for two or three nights!" On that Allah revealed"

Jundub ibn Sufyan · Sahih al-Bukhari 4950

TWO

Its themes

- Divine reassurance
- The Prophet's grief consoled
- The better yet to come
- Remembering past mercies
- Kindness to orphan and beggar
- Proclaiming Allah's favor

THREE

Key verses

Thy Guardian-Lord hath not forsaken thee, nor is He displeased.

Qur'an 93:3

"Your Lord has not forsaken you nor detested you," words for every believer who mistakes a silence from heaven for abandonment.

And soon will thy Guardian-Lord give thee (that wherewith) thou shalt be well-pleased.

Qur'an 93:5

"Your Lord will give you, and you will be satisfied," a promise so generous it answers grief not with a little relief but with full contentment.

Did He not find thee an orphan and give thee shelter (and care)?

Qur'an 93:6

"Did He not find you an orphan and shelter you?" past rescue is offered as the surest evidence that present care has not stopped.

Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness,

Qur'an 93:9

Because he was once a sheltered orphan, he must never oppress an orphan; received mercy is turned straight into given mercy.

But the bounty of the Lord – rehearse and proclaim!

Qur'an 93:11

"And as for the favor of your Lord, proclaim it," gratitude that is spoken and shown, not merely felt, becomes an act of worship.

FOUR

Reading it closely

Context & character

Ad-Ḍuḥā — “The Morning Brightness” — is a Makkan surah of eleven verses, and one of the most personal and tender passages in the whole Qur'an. It was revealed, according to well-known reports, after a pause in the coming of revelation (fatrat al-waḥy), during which the Prophet ﷺ grieved, and some of the disbelievers taunted that his Lord had abandoned him. The surah descends as pure consolation, directly reassuring the Prophet of his Lord's constant love.

The character of the surah is intimate, warm, and rising — it moves from reassurance, to promise, to a recollection of past mercies, to a set of gentle commands. Named for the daylight of its opening oath, it is a surah of light after darkness, of the morning that always returns. Though addressed first to the Prophet ﷺ, its comfort has been claimed by grieving believers in every generation who have felt, in a hard silence, that God has forgotten them.

How the surah unfolds

The surah opens (93:1–3) with two oaths — “by the morning brightness, and by the night when it grows still” — leading to the heart of the consolation: “Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased.” The oath by the still night before the bright morning is itself the message in miniature: the darkness of the pause was not abandonment but the quiet before the light, and God's care never lapsed.

It then lifts the Prophet's gaze forward and upward (93:4–5): “And surely the Hereafter is better for you than the former (life). And surely your Lord will give you, and you will be satisfied.” The present grief is placed against an ever-improving future and an open-ended divine generosity — “He will give you until you are content” — which the commentators take to include the honours of this world and, above all, the Prophet's intercession and reward in the next.

The surah then recalls three past mercies as evidence of the future one (93:6–8): “Did He not find you an orphan and shelter you? And find you lost and guide you? And find you in need and enrich you?” God's care is not a hope but a track record already written across the Prophet's life. From this the surah draws three gentle commands (93:9–11): “So as for the orphan, do not oppress him; and as for the one who asks, do not repel him; and as for the favour of your Lord, proclaim it.” The one who was an orphan is told to protect orphans; the one who was in need is told never to turn away the asker; and the one so richly favoured is told to speak of his Lord's grace.

The major themes, in depth

The first theme is that a season of divine silence is not a sign of divine displeasure. The whole surah answers a fear — that the pause in revelation meant God had turned away. The answer is emphatic: “He has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased” (93:3), and the very structure of night-then-morning shows that stillness precedes light in God's ordering of things. This speaks to every believer who has felt God distant in a dry spell of

prayer or a stretch of unanswered supplication. The surah reframes the silence: absence of the felt gift is not withdrawal of the Giver. The morning is coming; it was always coming.

The second theme is remembrance of past mercy as the ground of present trust. The surah's argument for the future ("your Lord will give you") is built entirely on the past ("did He not find you an orphan and shelter you?"). This is a method for the soul: when the present feels bleak, look backward at the unmistakable evidence of God's care already in your life, and let that evidence speak for the future. The three mercies — shelter for the orphan, guidance for the seeker, enrichment for the needy — cover the whole arc of a vulnerable life met by God at every turn. A Lord with such a record does not abandon at the end.

The third theme is that received mercy obligates given mercy. The surah does not end in comfort alone; it turns comfort into duty (93:9–11). Because you were an orphan and were sheltered, do not oppress the orphan. Because you were needy and were enriched, do not repel the one who asks. Because you were favoured, proclaim the favour. The gratitude the surah teaches is not merely verbal thanks but the passing-on of the very kinds of mercy one has received — the sheltered becomes a shelter, the guided a guide, the enriched a giver. Al-Sa'dī notes the beautiful correspondence: each command mirrors a mercy, so that the healed one becomes a healer in the exact place he was once wounded. And the last command — to proclaim God's favour — makes speaking of His blessings itself a form of worship and a lasting thanks.

Points of reflection

This surah is the believer's medicine for the feeling of abandonment. When prayers seem unanswered, when faith feels dry, when God seems silent, its opening line is a direct hand on the shoulder: He has not forsaken you. The reflection it teaches is to trust the pattern of morning-after-night rather than the mood of the present darkness.

It also models a practice of remembrance. In hard times, deliberately recall the specific mercies already in your story — the times you were sheltered, guided, provided for. The surah does not offer abstract reassurance; it offers evidence. Building a memory of God's past care is one of the strongest supports for trust in His future care.

And it closes the circle by turning the comforted into a comforter. The truest thanks for having been sheltered as an orphan is to shelter another; for having been enriched, to give; for having been guided, to guide. The surah leaves the reader not merely soothed but commissioned — to become, for someone else, the morning after their night. In every age this surah has consoled the grieving; its final gift is to show that consolation received is meant to be handed on.

FIVE

Carrying it

1. When heaven feels silent, recall His past mercies to you as proof that He has neither left you nor turned against you.
2. Repay the kindness you received by extending it: shelter the orphan and welcome the one who asks.
3. Speak openly of Allah's blessings on you, for proclaiming His favor is itself a form of thanks.

Where this reading draws from. Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, al-Sa'di, Taysir al-Karim al-Rahman, al-Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan. A summary is not a tafsir: for the verse-by-verse treatment go to the works themselves, or to the close studies at deen2u.com/tadabbur/.