

MIFTAAH SEMINAR

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: SURAH DUHA



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Context before the Revelation of Surah Duha

Six Months Before Revelation

- The Prophet ﷺ began to see dreams at night that were being manifested during the day.
- These visions caused him deep anxiety and emotional restlessness.
- During this six-month period, the Prophet ﷺ would often seclude himself in Cave Hira.

Three Events that Caused Anxiety

Even though these moments were heavy for the Prophet ﷺ, they were the beginning of his divine mission:

1. **Truthful dreams** he saw before revelation.
2. **Encounter with Jibreel** (AS) in the Cave of Hira. Jibreel (AS) instructed him to “Read”, hugged him, then suddenly disappeared.
3. **Waraqah's prophecy** of the Prophet's ﷺ eventual expulsion from Makkah.
 - These events were difficult, but they also marked the start of his relationship with Jibreel (AS), who became his closest friend.
 - According to Mufassireen, the Prophet ﷺ had a **minimum of 11 encounters** with Jibreel before Surah Duha was revealed.

Pause in Revelation

- The first surahs revealed in portions to the Prophet ﷺ included: Surah Iqra, Surah Al-Muzzammil, Surah Al-Muddaththir, Surah Al-Qalam, and Surah Al-Fatiha.
- During these initial encounters, the Prophet ﷺ was enjoying Jibreel's presence and companionship. Then suddenly, **Jibreel (AS) stopped coming down.**
 - Scholars say this gap lasted between 25 days to 6 months. The Prophet ﷺ began to feel a deep uneasiness.
- The Prophet ﷺ became sick, weak, and was even unable to stand for tahajjud due to the emotional toll.

Revelation of Surah Al-Duha

- After this difficult period, Allah (SWT) sent Jibreel (AS) again to the Prophet ﷺ with Surah Al-Duha.
- This surah was:
 - A **direct expression of Allah's love** to the Prophet ﷺ and a **divine reassurance** that He had **not abandoned him**.
- Surah Al-Duha represents a universal message of comfort.
- In the early revelations, Allah (SWT) consistently defended and reassured the Prophet ﷺ.
- When the people began calling the Prophet "majnoon" (insane), Allah (SWT) revealed:

مَا أَنْتَ بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ بِمَجْنُونٍ

"By the grace of your Lord, you 'O Prophet' are not insane." Surah Al-Qalam (68:2)

- These verses were loving defenses from Allah (SWT), affirming the Prophet's status and easing his heart in moments of doubt and rejection.

Verses 1 & 2

وَالضَّحْنِ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَنَ

"I swear by the forenoon and by night when it becomes peaceful".

- Allah (SWT) explains the contrast of eternal destinations of those who obey Him and those who disobey. In Surah al-Nisa, Allah (SWT) says:

وَمَن يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ, يُذْخَلُهُ جَنَّتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَرُ خَلِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

"Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will admit him to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. And that is the great success." (Surah al-Nisa 4:13)

- Here, the term **خَلِدِينَ** is used. This is a plural form meaning "forever" indicating the eternal companionship in Jannah.
- Immediately following, Allah warns:

وَمَن يَغْصِي اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ, وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ, يُذْخَلُهُ نَارًا خَلِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ, عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

"But whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses His limits, He will put him into the Fire to abide therein alone, and he will have a humiliating punishment." (Surah al-Nisa 4:14)

- In this verse, the term **خَلِدًا** is used. A singular form of "forever."
 - In **Jannah**, the plural form suggests community, companionship, and shared joy with family and the righteous.
 - In **Jahannam**, the singular form implies **isolation**, a solitary and personal punishment; often mirrored with the concept of solitary confinement in a prison.

Explanation of the Oath:

- Allah (SWT) takes an oath by **وَالضَّحْنِ** (the forenoon) and **وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَنَ** (the night when it becomes still). When Allah SWT swears by something, this is a sign that what He is swearing by is **noble, honorable, and significant**.

Meaning of **وَالضَّحْنِ**

- Linguistically it refers to the **early morning**, the time shortly after sunrise. This is the most **peaceful** and **soothing** part of the day.

- The light at this time highlights and beautifies everything it touches which signifies hope, calmness, and clarity.

Meaning of وَاللَّيلٌ إِذَا سَجَنَ

- **Saja** comes from the root meaning **stillness, motionless, like a dead body**.
- This implies that the night has reached its deepest point of stillness and darkness, a complete calm.
 - This contrasts the brightness of the forenoon (duha) which highlights the contrast between **light and darkness, activity and rest, and hope and despair**.
- When Allah (SWT) swears by وَالضَّحَى or other elements in the Quran, there is a deeper metaphorical meaning intended.
- Allah (SWT) says in Surah Yasin:

وَإِذَا لَهُمْ أَلْأَرْضُ الْمَيِّنَةُ أَخْيَنَهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبَّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ

"And a sign for them is the dead earth: We give it life and bring forth from it grain so they may eat from it." Surah Yasin (36:33)

- This verse comes after a series of ayahs in Surah Yasin describing the rejection of truth by many people. Despite the presence of messengers and callers to guidance, the hearts remained unmoved like "dead hearts."
 - This metaphor was sent to console the Prophet ﷺ that amidst rejection and grief; just like a **dead soil** needs rain to be revived, a **dead heart** can be revived through **wahy** (revelation).
- **Umar ibn al-Khattab** (RA) was once hostile to Islam, his heart was revived through Surah Taha, and he became a just caliph and a beacon of guidance for generations.
- **Khlaid ibn al-Walid** (RA) fought against the Prophet ﷺ at Uhud, but later embraced Islam and became the **Sword of Allah**, leading many battles for the cause of Islam.
 - For us no matter how far we are from Allah, as long as our hearts are beating, there is potential.

The 4 metaphoric meanings of Duha and al-Layl

- Duha is the **peaceful and enlightening arrival of wahy**. Al-Layl is the **painful stillness and absence of wahy**.
 - Just as the rising sun brings peace and clarity to the world, the coming of Jibreel (AS) with wahy brought peace and spiritual light to the Prophet ﷺ.
- Duha symbolizes those **uplifting spiritual moments** such as seeing the Ka'bah for the first time. In contrast, al-Layl symbolizes those **quiet and low spiritual struggles**.
 - The low phases are not disgraceful, they are honorable in Allah's (SWT) sight.
- Al-Duha metaphorically refers to **prosperity, comfort, joy, and times of ease**. Al-Layl reflects moments of **hardship, loss of loved ones, health, and stability**.
 - Adversity is not a sign of Allah's (SWT) displeasure. The Prophet's ﷺ greatest growth came through loss. For us, loss teaches us more.
- Duha represents **activity and movement**. Whereas al-Layl represents **stillness and lack of activity**.
 - Al-Duha is a time when we strive, earn, and fulfill our worldly responsibilities. Al-Layl, especially when it "settles" *saja*, represents stillness and inner reflection. This is a sacred time when the world sleeps but the hearts awaken in tahajjud.
 - Allah swears by both phrases, teaching us that **a complete believer is one who balances both** effort by the day, and stillness and connection by night.
- Allah (SWT) takes an oath on al-Duha and al-Layl because from **al-Duha** Allah SWT gives **honor to those that wake up in the early morning and do work**. The Prophet ﷺ said:
"The Barakah of my Ummah is in the mornings." (Tirmidhi)

How does al-Layl become an Honorable Thing?

- The stopping of **wahy** was unique to the Prophet ﷺ. Previous prophets received revelation all at once. But the Quran came over 23 years as this was a mercy for the people.
- Where al-Duha is honorable, al-Layl as in the **pause of revelation** is also necessary.

How do we relate to al-Layl:

- Allah (SWT) is telling us in the verse He loves it when we cry upon seeing the Ka'bah for the first time. But He *equally* loves it when:
 - We pray salah when we don't feel like praying, we make dua when it's hard to, and when we push through spiritual lows and keep striving.
 - This shows that we are not just **slaves of enjoyment**, but **slaves of the One who gives us enjoyment**.

The Prophet's ﷺ Examples:

- In surah Al-Muzzammil, Allah (SWT) says:

إِنَّ لَكَ فِي الْنَّهَارِ سُبْحَانَ طَوِيلًا

"Indeed, during the day you have long engagements (to attend to)." (Al-Muzzammil 73:7)

- Allah acknowledges the Prophet's ﷺ responsibilities during the day: meeting people, conveying revelation, solving problems. He had to "swim" through the sea of people.
- In surah Al-Sharh, Allah (SWT) gives him an instruction:

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَأَنْصِبْ وَإِلَى رِبِّكَ فَأَزْغَبْ

"So when you are free, then stand (in devotion). And to your Lord, direct your longing." (Al-Sharh 94: 7-8)

- "**فَأَنْصِبْ**" literally means to **stand firm like a peg driven into the ground**. After your daytime duties, stand still before Allah (SWT).
 - This command highlights that even the Prophet ﷺ, who spent his day calling people to Allah (SWT), still needed to **reserve time at night exclusively for Allah (SWT)**, away from the noise of the world.

Allah Swearing by al-Duha (Part of the Day) and al-Layl (the Entire Night)

- **Imam Razis Reflection:** The fact that Allah (SWT) swears by only a part of the day but the whole of the night is a divine indication that in this life, the moments of joy and ease (duha) are brief, while the periods of trials, sorrow, and difficulty (layl) are often longer and more encompassing.
 - Allah (SWT) was preparing His beloved Prophet ﷺ for a life that would not follow the typical prophetic arc of hardship followed by ease. Instead, the Prophet's life was filled with **layer upon layer of sorrow.**
- He SAW experienced the early loss of Khadijah (RA), which followed by the death of his daughter Zaynab (RA) in the 9th year of Hijrah.
 - Not long after, Allah (SWT) gives him a distraction: a baby boy, Ibrahim, whom he introduces with joy. Finally, a moment of warmth after so much sorrow. But this warmth, too, is brief. His daughter Umm Kulthum (RA) passed away.
 - Then, his **beloved son Ibrahim** passes away in his arms. He (SAW) had kept his sorrow in Zaynab's and Umm Kulthum's deaths. The Prophet ﷺ **cried more than ever before**, not out of favoritism, but because **his heart had held too much, for too long.**

Verse 3

قَوْدَعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَّ

"Your Lord has neither bid you farewell, nor has He turned away from you in displeasure."

- **وَدَعَكَ** doesn't mean "forsaken" in a harsh way. It comes from *wada'a*, used when people who **love** each other part ways.
- So Allah (SWT) is saying: "*I didn't lovingly say goodbye to you.*"
- This shows that even during the pause in revelation, **Allah's (SWT) love never left.**