

SUMMER IMMERSION

TAFSIR OF SURAHS AL-MUZZAMMIL & AL-MUDDATHTHIR



Mufti Abdul Wahab Waheed

SESSION 1

Introduction

- The Prophet (ﷺ) faced greater hardships than anyone else. He lost loved ones and endured persecution, mockery, and humiliation from the very community in which he was born and raised.
- The Qur'an consistently comforted and strengthened the Prophet (ﷺ) throughout its 23-year revelation. Every verse possesses a unique context, offering guidance and clarity for life's challenges.
- For example:
 - Surah Yusuf was revealed during the Year of Sorrow — following the heartbreaking losses of his wife, Khadija, and his uncle, Abu Talib.
 - Surah Ad-Duha was revealed during a period of time when he was deeply distressed due to a temporary pause in revelation.
 - Surah Al-Kawthar was revealed following the tragic loss of his infant son, Qasim.

Surah Al-Muzzammil

- For six months, the Prophet (ﷺ) sought solitude in the Cave of Hira. During this period of isolation, he received the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq as revelation.

- Scholarly opinions vary slightly on the exact sequence of the earliest revelations. After the first revelation, the scholars debate between either of these Surahs as the second revelation:
 - Surah Ad-Duha
 - Surah Al-Muzzammil
 - Surah Al-Muddaththir
 - Surah Al-Qalam
- The vast majority of scholars, including Ibn Abbas, placed the verses of Surah Al-Muzzammil as the second Surah, while the third, Surah Al-Muddaththir, followed by Surah Al-Qalam and Surah Ad-Duha.
- The experience of the very first revelation left the Prophet (ﷺ) truly overwhelmed that he rushed home to his wife, Khadija (RA), crying, زَمِّلُونِي (zammilūnī) and دَثِّرُونِي (daththirūnī) which means 'Cover me!', in which she provided comfort and support.
- Because Allah heard the Prophet's words, he describes in the opening verses of the Surahs, "Ya ayyuhal-Muzzammil" ("O you wrapped in garments!") and "Ya ayyuhal-Muddaththir" ("O you enveloped in cloaks!").
- زَمْل (Zammala) and دَثْر (Dathara) are very similar in Arabic. They both mean to cover. But the former is to be wrapped up in an external covering (i.e. in a blanket) and the latter refers to the inner sheet to cover oneself with.
- Surah Al-Muzzammil consists of 20 verses. There are three major themes of the Surah:
 - The opening verses (1-10) details the virtue and practice of Tahajjud (night prayer), as well as the Qur'an and its benefits.
 - The following verses (11-19) focus on the consequences and outcome of those who disobey Allah in the dunya and akhirah.

- The final verse (20) is the second-longest single verse in the Qur'an. It summarizes the core of the first 10 verses, acting as the closing of the Surah's ring structure. It begins and ends with the command of Tahajjud and the Qur'an.
- The order of revelation and its reasons according to Imam Al-Suyuti:
 - The First Revelation: Iqra
 - The command "Iqra" (Read) to the Prophet (ﷺ) is not a demand for literal reading, but a directive to "read" the signs of Allah throughout the universe. Because the Prophet (ﷺ) was unlettered, this marked an internal, spiritual awakening to find Allah.
 - The Second Revelation: Tahajjud
 - The early command to establish the Tahajjud provided a direct channel of communication. Religion can initially feel like a heavy or overwhelming burden. By directing the believer to stand in the quiet hours of the night, their primary responsibility is simply to turn toward Allah, pour out their heart, and speak to Him, regardless of their formal literacy or theological knowledge.

Ayah 1

- Allah never directly addresses the Prophet (ﷺ) by his name Muhammad in the Qur'an.
 - Instead, He addresses the Prophet (ﷺ) by his noble titles and affectionate descriptions, such as Ya Ayyuhal-Nabi (O Prophet), or through the revered honorifics of Ta-Ha and Ya-Sin.
 - This serves as a profound honor and reverence for the Prophet (ﷺ). It is a sign of immense love and respect.

- Two exceptions:
 - Jibril sometimes addressed the Prophet (ﷺ) directly by his name during casual conversations, distinct from delivering revelation.
 - Bedouin tribesmen called out to him plainly and informally by his given name due to their customary directness.
- The two perspectives on يا (Ya):
 - Minority opinion:
 - It denotes calling or addressing faraway individuals and indicates distance.
 - Majority opinion:
 - It signifies love. It acts as a term of endearment and emotional intimacy towards an individual.
 - Allah uses يا for the Prophet (ﷺ) as it demonstrates immense love, honor, and closeness within His divine address.
- أَيُّهَا (Ayyuha) — Means "O you". It serves as a soft, gentle and loving directive rather than an overpowering command.
- المزمّل (Al-Muzzammil) — Means "The Wrapped One".
 - Allah calling the Prophet (ﷺ) Al-Muzzammil shows His presence in our life. Khadija (RA) was the only one who witnessed that private moment of vulnerability. Yet, Allah revealed a verse naming the Prophet (ﷺ) by the very action he took to find comfort, proving that nothing we experience is hidden from Him.
 - Imam Al-Suyuti notes that Allah was reminding the Prophet (ﷺ) to take Him as his Disposer of affairs and to turn to Him for real comfort. The comfort the Prophet (ﷺ) sought in his blanket is replaced by the ultimate comfort of standing before his Allah.

- Three main interpretations for this title:
 - 1. The literal historic context:
 - The Prophet (ﷺ) wrapped himself in a cloak. This occurred out of intense fear after his first revelation. It addresses this physical state. This is the majority opinion.
 - 2. The figurative meaning:
 - The cloak symbolizes a heavier spiritual reality. It represents the mantle of Prophethood (Nubuwwah). Wrapping signifies preparing for immense responsibility.
 - 3. The functional context (night prayer):
 - The title connects directly to the next verses. It addresses someone wrapped up for sleep. The text commands him to stand in prayer. He must pray for half the night. It establishes Tahajjud as preparation.
- In summary, the first verse highlights Allah's nearness to the Prophet (ﷺ).

Ayah 2

- The second verse highlights our nearness to Allah and how we can establish this type of nearness through establishing Tahajjud.
- Virtues of Tahajjud:
 - Ahnaf ibn Qais said the greatest sign of a believer is that they pray Tahajjud.
 - Al-Hasan al-Basri stated that the standing of the night prayer (Tahajjud) is one of the greatest honors a believer can receive.
 - Imam al-Ghazali said that sins are what restrict a person from experiencing Tahajjud for months. He notes that Tahajjud is the "crown jewel" that is the key to tasting the sweetness of iman (faith). The sweetness of iman cannot be experienced by those who have the sweetness of sin within them.

- According to Wahb ibn Munabbih, three things are from the soul of this world:
 - 1. Meeting one another (i.e. enjoying each other's company)
 - 2. Feeding people, especially the fasting person (i.e. being generous)
 - 3. Qiyam al-Layl or standing for Tahajjud.
- Sufyan al-Thawri said: We would not believe that someone could be a friend of Allah without praying Tahajjud.
- Tahajjud is the most profound measure of a believer's proximity to Allah. Consistent night prayer is the greatest sign of a person's closeness to Allah in their life.
- When the heavy burden of revelation weighed upon the Prophet (ﷺ), Allah reminded him that there is no true refuge but Him. Allah is our ultimate sanctuary, teaching us that in moments of discomfort, He is the only place we can truly turn for comfort.
- قُمْ (Qum) — Means to "Arise" or "Stand".
 - It serves as a powerful reminder that a believer has no time to be passive.
 - It signifies that a believer cannot afford to sit back idly; we must constantly keep moving forward.
 - It indicates that our movement should be towards Allah irrespective of our condition (e.g. heartbroken).
- Ultimately, we can only survive fitan (trials) and distractions of the world by day if we dedicate our nights to connecting with Allah. This can be strengthened through Tahajjud or du'a at nighttime.
- After Salah, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to seek refuge from Allah for eight things with the following du'a:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحَزَنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ، وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ، وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ

Allahumma inni a'udhu bika minal-hammi wal-hazani, wal-'ajzi wal-kasali, wal-bukhli wal-jubni, wa dala'id-dayni wa ghalabatir-rijal.

Meaning: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from grief and sadness, from weakness and from laziness, from miserliness and from cowardice, and from being overcome by debt and oppressed by men."

- **الَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا** (Al-layla illā qalīlā) — Means "the night, except for a little".
 - Allah commands the Prophet (ﷺ) to stand the night in prayer, except for a small portion. This meant standing at least 90% of the night.

Ayah 3

- It serves as a continuation of the previous verse. Allah gives a practical measure of how much of the night should be dedicated to this devotion to avoid physical exhaustion.
- This is the concept of Tadarruj (gradualism). It is when Allah makes duties, changes, and personal growth easy when implemented in manageable stages because Allah recognizes His servants' ability.
- **نِصْفَهُ** (Nisfahu) — Means "half of it".
 - It refers to spending exactly half of the night awake in worship. Meaning, spending around 50% of the night.
- **أَوْ أَنْقُصْ** (Aw unqus) — Means "or reduce".
 - Allah is giving a slight allowance for those who might find standing for exactly half the night too difficult, permitting them to deduct from it. Meaning, spending around 30% of the night.
- **مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا** (Minhu qaleela) — Means "a little from it".
 - This clarifies that the deduction should not be drastic, but just a small amount, such as praying one-third of the night instead of one-half, depending on their capacity.

- Allah does not place strict demands on the duration of Tahajjud. Believers are given the flexibility to pray for the entire night, half of it, or even less — making the requirement completely manageable and free of hardship.
- The command for Tahajjud:
 - While this Surah uses an imperative command for Tahajjud, it is not classified as an obligatory (Fard) prayer because the Prophet (ﷺ) did not explicitly mandate it.
 - According to Ibn Abbas, Tahajjud is Fard for the prophets. There are unique commandments given specifically to the Prophet (ﷺ).
 - According to Aisha (RA), Allah initially made Tahajjud obligatory in the opening verses of this Surah. The Prophet (ﷺ) strictly observed this as Fard for the first six months up to a year. After the obligation was lifted, the Prophet (ﷺ) continued to faithfully pray Tahajjud every night on his own.

Ayah 4

- أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ (Aw zid 'alayhi) — Means "Or add to it/increase".
 - It gives the Prophet (ﷺ) and believers a choice regarding the length of the night prayers.
 - One can increase the time spent in worship if they choose to, without placing an undue burden on themselves.
- وَرَتَّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا (Wa rattili al-qur'āna tartīlā) — Refers to reciting/reading the Qur'an in a measured, slow, and rhythmic way.
 - ترتيل (Tartil) — Means to recite the Qur'an slowly and with clarity. It denotes a measured, rhythmic, and distinct recitation.
 - It indicates repetition. To study and memorize using Tartil, learners frequently repeat verses.

- Even though only five verses were revealed, the Prophet (ﷺ) was commanded to recite them repeatedly with tartil. Likewise, we should continuously recite whatever portion of the Qur'an we know during our Tahajjud prayers.

