

Two Surahs of Hope & Encouragement

Dhuha and Alam Nashrah



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A humble appeal is made to the readers to offer suggestions, corrections, etc. to improve the quality of this publication in the future. May Allah Ta'ala reward you for this.

The writers, editors and typesetters humbly request your du'aas for them, their parents, families, Asaatizah and Mashaayikh.

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Introduction

Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) underwent great difficulties and opposition in Makkah Mukarramah, due to which he was naturally affected and his morale was low.

At times, he was physically persecuted, with thorns being strewn in his path, the entrails of a camel being placed on his blessed back in salaah and with him being assaulted and strangled. Sometimes, the difficulty was in the form of the Quraish embarking on a smear-campaign to discredit him, by posting people on the different roads leading to Makkah Mukarramah, informing them that Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) was a madman, fraud or a soothsayer.

The difficulty even extended to his children, with his two daughters being divorced merely to cause him pain and difficulty. Likewise, the entire Banu Haashim family was placed under boycott for three long years.

Thereafter, when Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) went to Taa-if, hoping to spread Deen and gain an ally for the Muslims, he was greeted with stones, until his blessed blood flowed into his sandals. These are just some of the difficulties and challenges that

the beloved Rasul of Allah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) underwent.

Allah Ta‘ala revealed two surahs filled with inspiration and encouragement to console him and uplift his morale. The first is Surah Dhuha, followed by Surah Alam Nashrah.

Some narrations mention a more specific reason for the revelation of Surah Dhuha, which is as follows:

On one occasion, on account of sickness, Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) was unable to wake up for Tahajjud Salaah for a few nights. During this same period, Jibreel (‘alaihi salaam) did not bring any wahi (revelation) for a few days. The wife of Abu Lahab, Ummu Jameel, noticed that Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) had not received wahi and thus began to taunt him, saying that his ‘Shaitaan’ had abandoned him. This temporary cease in wahi, coupled with the taunts of the disbelievers, caused Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) a great amount of grief. In order to console Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), lift his spirits and encourage him, Allah Ta‘ala revealed Surah Dhuha. (*Saheeh Bukhaari #1125 & #4950 and Fat-hul Baari vol. 3, pg. 11*)

Although these surahs were revealed primarily to uplift the morale of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam), the message of these surahs is extremely motivational and uplifting for every individual. Therefore, a summary of the message of these surahs is presented in this book.

Surah Dhuha

Two Oaths

وَالضُّحَىٰ ﴿١﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ﴿٢﴾

By the glorious mid-morning light, and by the night when it becomes peaceful.

Allah Ta'ala commences the surah by taking an oath on two things; the night when it sets in and its darkness spreads, and the brightness of the midmorning.

An oath is generally taken to emphasize a point. In this case, the point which Allah Ta'ala emphasized by means of the dual oath was,

مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَىٰ ﴿٣﴾

Your Rabb has neither forsaken you nor has He become displeased.

The objects by which Allah Ta'ala takes oath in the Quraan Majeed usually have a link to whatever is being emphasized after the oath. In this case, the oath is emphasizing the following:

Just as even the darkest of nights will be followed by the brightness of daylight, similarly the grief you experienced and the taunts of the disbelievers that you suffered will be dispelled by the

noor (light) of this wahi that is being revealed to you. (*Ma'aariful Quraan - Kandhelwi vol. 8, pg. 480*)

The lesson in this is that there will always be light after darkness. Hence, no matter how difficult things may be, we should be patient and persevere, as there will be light at the end of the tunnel.

The Hereafter is Better

When a person undergoes difficulties, he sometimes feels that this calamity will remain forever and that there will be no relief. Hence, in the following verse, Allah Ta'ala explains that difficulties are temporary,

وَلِلْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ۖ

And surely the Hereafter is better for you than the present life.

This verse has two possible meanings. The first meaning is the meaning reflected by this translation – the Hereafter is better than this world. Although the disbelievers are taunting you and causing you grief in this world, We will bless you with great bounties in the Hereafter.

The second meaning is that the condition to come will be better than the condition that you were in. This means that Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), with every passing moment, was progressing in his proximity and relationship with Allah Ta'ala, as the favours of Allah Ta'ala were increasing at every moment. (*Ma'aariful Quraan vol. 8, pg. 766*)

He will Please You

وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ ۗ

Your Rabb will definitely give you so much that you will be pleased.

In this verse, Allah Ta‘ala did not specify what He would bless Rasulallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) with. Hence, the commentators of the Quraan Majeed have sufficed on what the verse itself mentions – Allah Ta‘ala will give Rasulallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) whatever would please him. (*Tafseer Mazhari vol. 10, pg. 260*)

This includes the progress and spread of Islam after all the initial difficulties that the Muslims were undergoing at that time, every need of the Ummah and victory against the enemies of Islam.

Three Favours

Allah Ta‘ala thereafter reminds Rasulallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) of just three favours that He had blessed him with:

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ ۖ

Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?

Rasulallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) was born an orphan, as his father had passed away prior to his birth. When he was just six years old, his mother passed away. He thereafter lived with his grandfather, ‘Abdul Muttalib, until he was eight years old and

'Abdul Muttalib passed away. He then lived with his uncle, Abu Taalib, and remained under his protection, until Abu Taalib passed away. When Abu Taalib passed away, the Quraish intensified their persecution of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and the Muslims.

However, just as Allah Ta'ala had cared for Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and arranged for his safety throughout his blessed life, Allah Ta'ala again arranged for his safety when He commanded him to migrate to Madeenah Munawwarah where the Ansaar welcomed him into their hearts and homes and were prepared to defend and protect him under all circumstances. (*Tafseer Ibni Katheer vol. 7, pg. 592*)

After hijrah, Madeenah Munawwarah became the centre of Islam and the hub from which conquest after conquest and victory after victory were attained.

وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَىٰ

And He found you unaware of the way and then guided you?

Prior to receiving the mantle of prophethood and wahi, Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) was unaware of wahi, sharee'ah and the divine knowledge that Allah Ta'ala subsequently blessed him with. Hence, Allah Ta'ala expresses this as a great favour upon Nabi (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) – the favour of Deen and the knowledge of Deen. (*Tafseer Qurtubi vol. 22, pg. 342*)

وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ

And He found you in need and made you independent?

The third favour which Allah Ta‘ala expresses is the favour of wealth. This began when Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) carried out a trade expedition on behalf of Sayyidah Khadeejah (radhiyallahu ‘anha). Their agreement was that she would finance the expedition by putting up the capital, and Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) would see to the rest of the expedition (purchasing goods, travelling, selling, etc.). Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) earned a profit from this expedition. The next stage of financial independence arrived when Sayyidah Khadeejah (radhiyallahu ‘anha), who was wealthy, proposed marriage for Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam). Once they were married, she made all her wealth available to Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and spent her wealth for the sake of Deen.

Just as Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) was blessed with the wealth of this world, Allah Ta‘ala also blessed him with the greatest wealth – the wealth of the heart i.e. contentment.

(Tafseer Qurtubi vol 22, pg. 346 and Ma‘aariful Quraan vol. 8, pg. 767)

Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said, “True wealth is not through possessing abundant wealth and riches. Rather, true wealth is the wealth of the heart.” *(Saheeh Bukhaari #6446)*

Pondering over the Favours of Allah

A very effective remedy in dispelling depression is for a person to ponder over the countless favours which Allah Ta‘ala has blessed him with. Hence, when Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam)

was undergoing grief, Allah Ta'ala reminded him of some of the great favours which he had been blessed with. If we ponder over the blessings that we enjoy, we will realize that they far outnumber the few difficulties that we suffer.

Three Actions

In comparison to the three aforementioned blessings of Allah Ta'ala, Allah Ta'ala mentions three actions which should be carried out as a form of gratitude.

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ۝

Therefore, as for the orphan, then do not oppress him.

Kindness to the orphan and ensuring that one does not oppress the orphan in any way is an injunction which applies to every individual.

Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said, "I, and the one who looks after an orphan, will be together in Jannah like this." Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) then held up his index and middle finger with just a slight gap between them (in order to show the proximity). (Saheeh Bukhaari #5304)

However, as Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) had enjoyed Allah Ta'ala's divine arrangements for care and protection when he was himself an orphan, Allah Ta'ala specifically mentions this injunction as a form of gratitude.

وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ۝

And as for the beggar, then do not scold him.

Not scolding the beggar means that the beggar should be treated with kindness. If one is able to give the beggar something, then he should do so. If one does not wish to give anything to the beggar, then one should turn him away politely, not by scolding, shouting and disgracing him. We need to realize that the roles can be swapped at any time.

وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١٧﴾

And as for the bounty of your Rabb, then speak.

The third action is ‘tahdeeth bin ni’mah’ i.e. expressing the favours of Allah Ta’ala as a means of gratitude. This includes praising Allah Ta’ala for showering him with these favours and also being grateful to the one who was a means of the favour coming to him. (*Tafseer Ibni Katheer vol. 7, pg. 593*)

Sayyiduna Abu Hurairah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) narrates that Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said, “The one who is ungrateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah.” (*Sunan Tirmizi #1955*)

Obviously, one should only speak of the favours which Allah Ta’ala has showered upon him before people who are his well-wishers, or else he risks creating jealousy within the hearts of people who do not wish well for him.

Furthermore, this expression should not be as a means of boasting, rather as a means of gratitude. Thus if a person does not have control over himself and fears that he may boast instead of expressing the favours, he should not talk about these favours.

Surah Alam Nashrah

Surah Alam Nashrah commences with the theme of Surah Dhuha, enumerating some of the great blessings which Allah Ta'ala bestowed upon Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam).

Thereafter, Allah Ta'ala gives Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) the glad tidings of ease that will follow these days of difficulty, and explains an effective prescription for overcoming difficulties.

Expanding Your Chest

The first of these blessings is:

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ﴿١﴾

Did We not expand for you your chest?

In this verse, 'expansion of the chest' could have different meanings.

Firstly, it refers to Allah Ta'ala expanding the chest of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) to such an extent that it could preserve the wordings, manner of recitation, meanings and deduced laws of the Quraan Majeed. Further, Rasulullah's (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) blessed chest could encompass the vast and extensive knowledge of the heavens and the earth and deep understanding and recognition of the being and qualities of

Allah Ta'ala. (*Tafseer Mazhari vol. 10, pg. 267, Ma'ariful Quraan - Kandhelwi vol. 8, pg. 485 and Khutubaat 'Uthmaani vol. 6, pg. 282*)

Secondly, it refers to the beautiful character of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), due to which he had a very high level of tolerance and endurance. Hence, no matter what obstacles impeded and hindered his efforts to propagate Deen, Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) endured it, always persevered and never gave up. (*Ad-Durrul Manthoor vol. 6, pg. 614 and Bayaanul Quraan vol. 3, pg. 650*)

A third meaning of 'sharh' is the blessing of having a clear mind to make the correct decision, without hesitation, in a conflicting situation. During the twenty-three years of Rasulullah's (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) nubuwah, there were many decisions that he had to make in extremely sensitive and conflicting situations, and he took all these decisions with great ease and without any hesitation. (*Khutubaat 'Uthmaani vol. 6, pg. 283*)

Some Mufasssireen have taken the literal meaning of the word 'sharh' in the verse. Hence, they explain that this verse refers to the numerous occasions in which Allah Ta'ala had sent angels to split the blessed chest of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and wash his blessed heart with Zamzam. (*Tafseer Ibni Katheer vol. 7, pg. 595*)

Removing Your Burden

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ ﴿١١﴾

And remove from you your burden which had weighed upon your back?

The responsibility that was placed upon Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) was never placed on any other individual. He was given the responsibility of dispensing guidance and showing the path of salvation to mankind until the Day of Qiyaamah. However, with this responsibility came great challenges and hurdles.

He was born in a place that was steeped in idol-worship, paganism, immorality, shamelessness and the worst forms of vices. Then, at the age of forty, when a person’s strength and faculties generally begin to decline, he began to receive wahi, the weight of which could not even be endured by mountains. Despite being unlettered, he had to preserve this wahi in its pure and pristine form and pass on its words, manner of recitation, meaning and laws to humanity. In the beginning, all of this had to be achieved with very little support and immense opposition.

Hence, this verse explains that Allah Ta‘ala had removed this burden from Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and made this mammoth task easy for him. (*Tafseer Qurtubi vol 22, pg. 357*)

Raising Your Name

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ۝

And raised high for you your name?

This is the third favour upon Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) that Allah Ta‘ala mentions in this surah.

No other person in the world enjoys this favour – that his name is taken in every part of the world, and not a second passes

without his blessed name been taken. Millions across the globe are named after him and abundant salutations are perpetually sent upon him daily. There is no person whose life, qualities, actions and statements have been meticulously recorded, documented and discussed in the manner in which Rasulullah's (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) seerah has been collated.

Furthermore, Allah Ta'ala has made Deen such, that the majority of the time, when we take the name of Allah Ta'ala, we also take the blessed name of Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), whether it be when reciting the kalimah or the shahaadah, or when calling out the azaan and iqamah, or when reciting the khutbah or on other occasions. This is indeed a great honour for Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). (*Tafseer Qurtubi vol 22, pg. 357*)

Ease with Difficulty

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ﴿٢﴾

Verily, with every difficulty there is ease. Verily, with every difficulty there is ease.

One meaning of this is that even while a person is suffering from a calamity, he still enjoys many bounties and much ease from Allah Ta'ala. (*Roohul Ma'aani vol. 16, pg. 306*)

For example, if a person is afflicted with an illness in a certain part of his body, the rest of his body is still functioning correctly. Further, he has the ease of visiting a doctor and treating the

illness. He also enjoys the comfort of his family attending to him and serving him during that time.

In this way, together with the difficulty of the illness, he enjoyed so many forms of ease from the side of Allah Ta'ala. Apart from this, is the bounty of him being rewarded tremendously for the patience he exercises upon that calamity.

Qaadhi Shuraih (rahimahullah) mentioned, "There is no servant of Allah Ta'ala who is afflicted by a calamity except that he enjoys three favours of Allah Ta'ala (in regard to the calamity). The first favour is that the calamity did not occur in his Deen, the second is that the calamity was not worse, and the last is that it was meant to happen, and it happened (i.e. now at least it is over)." (*Ash-Shukr - Ibnu Abid Dunya #80*)

Another meaning is that every difficulty is followed by ease. (*Tafseer Ibni Katheer vol. 7, pg. 597*) Hence the difficulty that the person is undergoing will not be permanent, rather the person who exercises patience over his trial, trusts in Allah Ta'ala, begs from Him in du'aa, and has hope in His grace and mercy, then he will most definitely see Allah Ta'ala changing his difficulties and calamities into ease and prosperity.

Additionally, in this verse, the word 'usr - difficulty' is 'ma'rifah - specific' and the word 'yusr - ease' is 'nakirah - unspecified'. The Mufasssireen explain that according to the Arabic laws of grammar, when a specific word is repeated, the second will refer to the same thing as the first. However, when an unspecified word is repeated, the second word will refer to something different and the first word will refer to something different. This means that

for every one difficulty that a person will encounter, he will enjoy two blessings in exchange. (*Tafseer Ibni Katheer vol. 7, pg. 598*)

Hence, when the General of the Muslim armies, Sayyiduna Abu ‘Ubaidah bin Jarraah (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), wrote to Sayyiduna ‘Umar (radhiyallahu ‘anhu), expressing concern over the large numbers of the Roman armies, Sayyiduna ‘Umar (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) replied, “Whenever a difficult condition comes upon a believer, Allah Ta‘ala makes a way out after it. And indeed a single difficulty will never overcome double ease.” (*Muwatta Imaam Maalik #1621*)

Sayyiduna ‘Abdullah bin Mas‘ood (radhiyallahu ‘anhu) mentioned, “If difficulty has to enter a hole, ease will most definitely pursue it and enter that hole as well. And a single difficulty will never overcome double ease.” (*Tafseer Qurtubi vol. 22, pg. 359*)

A poet has similarly said,

إِذَا اشْتَدَّتْ بِكَ الْبَلْوَى فَفَكِّرْ فِي أَلَمِ نَشْرَحِ
فَعُسْرَ بَيْنِ مُسْرِينِ إِذَا فَكَّرْتَهُ فَأَفْرَحِ

*When your calamity becomes intense and severe, then ponder over
Surah Alam Nashrah.*

*Every difficulty is between double ease. When you have pondered over
this, be happy.*

In fact, some Mufasssireen have mentioned that the number two in ‘two favours’ is not for the purpose of restricting the favours to two. Rather, the purpose is to show that the favours in exchange of the difficulty will be more than one, i.e. multiple favours. (*Ma‘aariful Quraan vol. 8, pg. 772*)

Turning to Allah Ta'ala

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ۖ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْجِعْ ۖ

Therefore, when you are free, then work hard, and turn all your attention to your Rabb.

The mission of Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) was to manage the office of Deen and propagate Deen to the Ummah. In doing this, Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) attended to the needs of the Ummah in every department of Deen (e.g. self-rectification, tableegh, ta’leem, etc.).

However, although his effort in these avenues and interacting with people for these purposes was regarded as ‘ibaadah, it was an indirect form of ‘ibaadah.

Therefore, Allah Ta’ala commanded Rasulullah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) to ensure that when he is free from these indirect ‘ibaadaat, he should engage in direct forms of ‘ibaadah, such as salaah, reciting the Quraan Majeed, engaging in zikr, making du’aa, etc.

Furthermore, this verse also indicates to the fact that it is possible to become free from the Deeni work that one does for the benefit of people. However, there is no limit and no end to the personal ‘ibaadah that a person needs to engage in. Rather, the verse instructs us to tire ourselves in this form of ‘ibaadah. (*Ma’aariful Quraan vol. 8, pg. 772*)

When this is the case with Deeni work, then what will be the situation with worldly occupations and commitments? Unfortunately, our situation is such that we try to get over with our salaah and other ‘ibaadaat, so that we can tire ourselves in entertainment. We need to take out some quality time daily to engage in nafl salaah, zikr, tilaawat and du‘aa. It is this that will give us the strength and endurance to manage the challenges of life.

Real Solution

These verses explain the most effective prescription for overcoming difficulties and the real solution to problems and depression – turning to Allah Ta‘ala completely and focusing entirely on Him, since He is the only One Who can solve our problems and alleviate our difficulties.

Nabi Ya‘qoob (‘alaihi salaam) was separated from his beloved son, Nabi Yusuf (‘alaihi salaam) for many years. His grief over the separation and his concern for Nabi Yusuf (‘alaihi salaam) was such that he continued to cry – until his crying caused him to become blind. Yet, through this entire test, he complained to Allah Ta‘ala alone and made du‘aa to Him alone.

The Quraan Majeed mentions the statement of Nabi Ya‘qoob (‘alaihi salaam) as:

إِنَّمَا أَشْكُوا بِنِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ

I only complain of my anguish and suffering to Allah Ta‘ala.

(Surah Yusuf v86)

Similarly, after Rasulullah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) underwent the persecution of the people of Taa-if, where they not only humiliated him but physically harmed him, he turned to Allah Ta'ala in du'aa.