

Fast 13: The Holy Prophet — An orphan raised to greatness

“¹By the brightness of the day! ²And the night when it is still! — ³Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased. ⁴And surely the later state is better for you than the earlier. ⁵And soon will your Lord give you so that you will be well pleased.

وَالضُّحَىٰ ﴿١﴾ وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ ﴿٢﴾ مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَ
مَا قَلَىٰ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَا خَيْرَ خَيْرُكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَسَوْفَ
يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَىٰ ﴿٥﴾

⁶ Did He not find you an orphan and give (you) shelter? ⁷And find you groping, so He showed the way? ⁸And find you in want, so He enriched you?

أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا
فَهَدَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾

⁹Therefore the orphan, do not oppress. ¹⁰And him who asks, do not rebuke. ¹¹And the favour of your Lord, do proclaim.” — Ch.

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ
﴿١٠﴾ وَأَمَّا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّكَ فَحَدِّثْ ﴿١١﴾

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This chapter is one of the earliest revelations of the Holy Prophet. It prophesied that the truth of Islam would come to shine like the sun shines when it has risen high in the sky, as it opens with the words: “By the brightness of the day!”

Verse 2: “And the night when it is still!” — But Islam and Muslims can face situations when it is dark all around and there is no sign of progress. This situation was faced in the first few years after the Holy Prophet started his mission. In later Islamic history, during the past few centuries, again there is darkness for Islam and the Muslims everywhere.

Verse 3: “Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor is He displeased.” — This verse assures the Holy Prophet and his followers that when such situations of darkness arise, it does not mean that God has abandoned Islam and the Muslims.

Verses 4: “And surely the later state is better for you than the earlier.” — Some people take this to mean that the life after death is better than the present life in this world. But the context shows that it is a prophecy that the later state of the Holy Prophet’s mission would be better than its earlier state. That is why **verse 5** says: “And soon will your Lord give you so that you will be well pleased.” It is also a prophecy for the future, applying to our times. It means that, when Islam is suffering a state of decline and decay, as has happened in modern times, we should remember that a time will come when its condition will be better than at present.

Verses 6–8: These verses remind the Holy Prophet that:

1. God had given him a home, rescuing him from the deprivation he suffered as an orphan;
2. he had been struggling and groping to find the truth about life and existence, and God had guided him to it;
3. he was enriched, with *spiritual* wealth. Also, as ruler of Arabia, which he became, he had control of the national wealth of the Muslims. But this he used for the good of the general public while he and his family lived more simply than anyone else.

Verses 9–11: Verses 9, 10 and 11 correspond respectively to the three previous verses 6, 7 and 8. They say that just as God had been kind and generous to the Holy Prophet, the Prophet should treat others in the same way, who are in the same conditions as he was:

- v 9. He must not oppress the poor and destitute, but rather be their support;
- v 10. “And him who asks, do not rebuke” — Some people take “him who asks” to mean *a beggar* and consider this command as being that he should not speak angrily to someone who begs from him and turn him away. But this verse corresponds to verse 7 which said that the Holy Prophet was groping for the truth and God had guided him to it. So what this verse really means is that the Holy Prophet must not rebuke anyone who asks a question because he lacks knowledge and is searching for the answer. Instead the Holy Prophet must explain to him gently.

This can be compared with the incident mentioned in chapter 80, when a blind man interrupted the Holy Prophet’s conversation with some important persons and the Prophet *frowned* at this. God told the Prophet in that chapter to pay as much regard to such people *who ask* as to people who consider themselves too important to ask anyone to guide them.

- v 11. “And the favour of your Lord, do proclaim” — In thankfulness for the spiritual wealth, i.e. revelation, bestowed on him, he must proclaim it to the world.

All this guidance applies to every Muslim also. The last point above — “And the favour of your Lord, do proclaim” — can be taken in a general sense, meaning that in regard to the favours and good things we receive from God, we must *mention them to others as a mark of thankfulness to God*. This will keep us happy as well. Must we be miserable all the time and tell people only about our misfortunes, what we lack and the problems which we suffer?