**Surah Layl**

Alhamdulillahi Rabb il’Alameen, was-salaatu was-salaamu ‘ala syedil anbiyai wal mursaleen wa ‘ala aalihi...

Assalamo alaikum wa rahmatullahe wa barakatuhu.

In shaa Allah we’re studying Suratush Shams today and I’m experimenting with a new approach to conducting this session so please make dua that it’s a successful experiment, bi idhnillah.

The experiment is as follows: I’m gonna try to establish the parallels or at least articulate the parallels between this surah and the previous one, lump sum in the beginning. Then we’ll talk about the layout of this surah, second, and then actually go into the ayah by ayah tafseer study and the word by word analysis in shaa Allaho Ta’ala.

So we begin of course—based on that methodology—with a series of parallels between Suratul Layl, which we’re studying now, and Suratush Shams, the one that preceded it.

So while Suratush Shams mentions, in its beginning, wannahare idha jallaha, wallayle idha yaghshaha; this is in the previous surah. So it mentioned the day and then it mentioned the night. And it mentioned the verb jalla with day, and it mentioned the word yaghsha… the verb yaghsha with night; so ‘to be bright’ and also ‘to cover up’. The opposite sequence is used in the very beginning of this surah, so we’re finding wallayle idha yaghsha, wannahare idha tajalla. It’s the reverse, there was day and night, and now here’s night and day.

The other thing that is interesting to note from a grammatical or syntax point of view, is in the previous surah we learned yaghshaha, there was the additional pronoun ‘ha’. So we learn that the night covers the sun up, it covers up the sun. Yaghshaha, the ‘ha’ referring to the sun. Here Allah just says wallayle idha yaghsha, He doesn’t mention the object of the verb as you say in English, or the maf’oolun bihi. It is not mentioned, the zameer mutasil is not mentioned. And the benefit of that, of not mentioning it, is it of course creates the question… when you say I swear by the night as it covers up—that’s what the beginning says: wallayle idha yaghsha, I swear by the night as it covers up—the obvious question that pops in your mind is: What does it cover up? What does it cover up? And of course, the answer to that has already been established in the previous surah, it covers up… the sun, right, as many of the mufassiroon have commented. What we’re learning here is that this surah is almost expecting you to look at the previous surah as a reference point. Because by saying yaghsha by itself and not mentioning its object, you’re forced to think about the object that’s already been mentioned in the previous surah. Similarly, Allah Azza wa Jal, in the previous surah, says: wannahari idha jallaha; that’s in the previous surah, in Suratush Shams. Allah says: ‘The day, as it makes the Sun brilliant’, but here the day itself is brilliant: wannahare idha tajalla. Now we know what makes it brilliant in the previous surah, the manifestation of the Sun itself. So the two are intricately connected even how… even the way you think about the subtleties in language. One is forcing you to consult the other.

Then another interesting nuance that’s been mentioned about the two verb tenses: when Allah speaks about the night, and its covering up, He uses the present tense—yaghsha, al-fail mudare’. But when He talked about the day making bright, He didn’t use the present tense al-mudare’, He used al-madi: ‘jallaha’ and ‘tajalla’, they’re both madi, they’re both the past tense. But when He spoke about the night and its covering up He used the present tense. Now in English we think of the past tense and present tense in very simple terms, but in the Arabic language one of the benefits of the present tense, al-mudare’, is incompletion or partiality, you know, some little bit of something and then little bit of something more etc., it’s an incomplete sort of a thing. While the past tense is considered a complete act, it’s something complete. And the way it’s been commented on—I’ll just read the Arabic off to you: ???, the benefit of using present tense with the night covering up is that it only covers little by little, it takes stages to cover up, and it doesn’t necessarily cover everything. Even though the night is dark, it doesn’t make everything invisible, it doesn’t hide everything like it hides the Sun. Actually we learned the previous surah something still… a remnant of the sun… still comes out in the night, which is the moon that follows it, right, walqamari idha talaha. So we know that the present tense here, the benefit of it is that it’s not absolute in its covering. But when Allah speaks about the day, He says ‘jallaha’ and ‘tajalla’ which are past tenses, which means they’re absolute. It’s… the whole act is done, meaning the day immediately brightens everything, and makes everything manifest, and nothing is hidden now; everything is out in the open. So the way that’s covered; when the mufassir speaks he says: wa laysa kannahar alladhi atajalla daf’atan wahida bi mujarradi tulu’ish-shams: It’s not like the morning time which immediately, in one shot, it gives brilliance to everything. Once day manifests everything starts becoming clear immediately.

The next oath that Allah Azza wa Jal takes, that’s again in keeping with comparison from the previous surah: Allah says in the previous surah: Wassamaa’e wa ma banaha, wal ardi wa ma tahaha, this was, we learned in Suratush Shams. So Allah spoke about the sky and its architecture, and the earth and its expanse and its smoothness. But now here, he takes a different oath, He doesn’t mention the sky and the earth anymore, He says: Wa ma khalaqadh dhakara wal untha, “How remarkable the creation of… how remarkably He created… or what could have created such a remarkable creation of the male and the female!” So the previous surah had the contrast of the sky and the earth, and this one has the contrast of the male and the female. And there are actually many parallels between the sky and the earth as a contrast and the male and the female as a contrast. We’re being asked, almost, to reflect upon the parallels between them. The sky and the earth go together for a larger purpose and create a day. The day is not and… you know… and the sky, it works in cohesion with the earth to produce vegetation. The earth could not produce what it produces unless it gets help from the sky and the water that comes down from the sky. So they work together for the process of life to continue. And so does male and female. So the plant life on the earth, it’s like the earth gets impregnated with plants. Just like the female gets impregnated by the male. So there’s these parables of the process of life that take two very completely different things, two contradictory things and makes them part of a whole, as though they’re not two separate entities, they’re part of one larger picture. Though they’re apart, they’re part of one larger scheme. So in the previous surah, Allah Azza wa Jal mentions different aspects of His takhleeq, of the process of creation. He used the words, the verbs banaha, tahaha: ‘He constructed’, He… you know… ‘He levelled out’, right, ‘He built.’ These are all different aspects of creating, but here He used the comprehensive term, almost putting the two together, when He says wa ma *khalaqa* adhdhkara wal untha, so the word khalaqa is more comprehensive, it sort of sums up what the previous partial words were illustrating in the previous surah; banaha and tahaha.

Then another very interesting nuance is that in the previous surah, Allah Azza wa Jal spoke in the third person, He spoke in the third person. Wa nafsin wa ma sawaha, fa alhamaha fujoorahja wa taqwaha, qadd aflaha man zakkaha… so He spoke continuously in the third person, but in this surah we will find Allah Azza wa Jal immediately switches over and He starts speaking to the… in the second person. So for example He says fa andhartu*kum* naaran talazza: I’m warning *you*, I’ve warned *you*, so this goes from third person to second person and we should understand the purpose of going from third person ‘he, she, they’, to second person. Third person is general; when I say, you know, a person should be good, a person should be generous, a person should be kind; in your mind you’re thinking it could be any person, not necessarily you. I’m talking in general terms. But when I say *you*, I’m not talking about just anyone, I’m talking about *you*, it’s like I’m taking a universal lesson and making it applicable directly to you. So the previous surah had these universal lessons in the third person, but now we’re learning they’re not just for you to think about in theory, these lessons apply to you directly, so there’s this switch from third person—universal, to second person—specifically to us, as the audience, or the audience… the original audience of the Prophet sallallahu ‘alaihe wa sallam.

So in the previous surah now, we learned wa nafsin wa ma sawaha, fa alhamaha fujooraha wa taqwaha. We learned about this incredibly balanced creation of the nafs. And how Allah programmed it to recognize its evil capacities and its capacity to protect itself; what is good for it, what is bad for it; an innate nature—a fitrah—was already put inside of it that it can figure out what’s good and what’s bad and that this is ilham from Allah. Allah inspired it to have this much sense, which you can call a conscience that we talked about last time, right? But in this surah, Allah takes the foundation that He established and He, He tells us despite the fact that all of you have been preprogrammed, with such an ability, it’s still interesting to know inna sa’yakum la shatta, that all of your efforts are all over the place, they’re dispersed, and we’ll take about the word shatta when we come by, come to ayah by ayah tafseer. But essentially what we’re learning is, even though all of you know what is good and what is bad essentially, we still don’t find all of you doing the same good things, we find some of you are doing good and some of you are doing bad. Your efforts are all over the place, inna sa’yakum la shatta. Yet the thing to note is; in the previous surah Allah mentioned the feelings… or the, you know, what goes on inside the nafs: wa nafsin wa ma sawwaha, fa alhamaha fujooraha wa taqwaha, qadd aflaha man zakkaha, wa qadd khaba man dassaha. Cleansing the nafs, an internal thing, right? Putting the nafs ??? an internal thing, a psychological, a disease of the heart, if you will, right, a disease of the nafs. But here we’re finding the outside, the outwardly. So the previous surah talked about the nafs and its inner state and immediately now inna sa’yakum, your efforts; and efforts are outward, they’re actions; so the inside, what going on inside the person, and what’s happening outside, are being compared in between these two surahs. Similarly in the previous surah we learned, in Suratush Shams, qadd aflaha man zakkaha, the one who cleansed it, who was able to clean themselves up literally, they’re the ones who’ve actually already attained success. In this surah Allah will describe what does that mean, how do you attain that success. In the previous surah it was just left as a declration, whoever made an attempt to cleanse it has attained success—the ‘how’ was not answered. The ‘how’, the question mark, remained. Now that question is being answered, fa amma man ‘aata wattaqa, wa saddaqa bil husna, fa sanuyassiruhu lil yusra. That entire definition is basically an exposition, it’s explaining what Allah Azza wa Jal mentioned in the previous surah about the one who attained success. That path to success is being described. Similarly, in the previous surah Allah said wa… you know, wa qadd khaba man dassaha, the one who basically abased his nafs, put it in the dust, basically literally failed. What is that path to failure, this is going to be described in this surah when we study the translation: Wa amma man bakhila wastaghna, wa kadhdhaba bil husna, fa sanuyassiruhu lil’usra, so that the two summarized declarations are now being given full-detail in this surah.

Another very interesting and subtle beauty of this surah is the two problems of rebellion; what is on the outside is tughyan; kadhdhabat thamoodo bi tughwaha, this is what we learned in the previous surah; that Thamood lied against the truth because of their rebellion, they rebelled against the truth. But in this surah the disease is not rebellion, the disease is something else. Wa ma yughni unhu **maal**uhu idha taradda. Similarly, istaghna, right? So these… what are these words, what do all of them have to do with? They all have to do with wealth. He’ll find his wealth doesn’t benefit him when he, he wants to become free of need. In other words, once this person starts becoming wealthy, they start… stop relying on Allah, they start relying on their wealth. They stop feeling that they’re dependent, they feel they’re independent because of their wealth. And when you feel independent financially, or you think you can manage on your own, then you don’t feel the authority of someone else, because you’re no longer dependent. You know when you’re working for your boss, and he controls your paycheck, then you’re a little more obedient. Because if you… if you, you know, mess around and you do things the way you wanna do them, your paycheck’s gonna stop. But if you feel you’re rich enough; you hit the jackpot, some of you inherited a few million dollars. What happens to your obedience to your boss? Immediately it starts disappearing, rebellion takes course, right. Rebellion comes in. But the source of it was wealth. Right? We see this in human nature. So the previous surah mentions rebellion, taghwa, right, bi taghwaha, and this surah mentions one of the root causes of rebellion is this diseased attitude towards ones wealth or ones assets. So that’s mentioned in the word istaghna, it’s mentioned in the words wa ma yughni anhu maluhu idha taradda. And then finally also to cleanse yourself of that attitude, alladhi yutee ma luhu yatazakka, we’ll read that ayah also. So it’s a whole. The theme has become wealth here, that’s become a major problem in the psyche of people.

Similarly, and this is something remarkable, two kinds of people have been mentioned, right, the… the good, the righteous, wa saddaqa bil husna, and also the wretched, wa kadhdhaba bil husna; the one accepts the ultimate good, the one who rejects the ultimate good. But you know, both of these people are in trouble. You know, you ever heard the idea of what’s considered self-righteous? Meaning a person does good things, they protect themselves from evil things, they act righteously, they obey Allah, they don’t fall into the wrong things, but then they start developing the attitude that they are guided, that they somehow own guidance. Because they’re such good people, they are on the right path, they’re guided. Allah Azza wa Jal mentions even that as a disease. So He says inna ‘alaina lalhuda, We… upon… it is only upon Ourselves that We take the responsibility of guidance, guidance is not something you’re gonna have. You’re never gonna have it, you’re gonna keep asking for it. You’ll get it when Allah gives it, and the moment you stop asking it won’t be there. So it’s not something you can own through your deeds. You have to own it, or you can only get advantage of it, when you beg Allah Azza wa Jal for it. Of course we learn this lesson, very simple lesson, every time we recite the Fatiha, we ask Allah for guidance. Ihde nassiratal mustaqeem.

So this was the righteous and how Allah corrects him in the verse inna ‘alaina lalhuda. But then there’s the wretched, and the wretched person who disobeys and rebels against Allah, who we already said feels free of need. This person thinks that he is in control, he owns, he’s in charge. And of course when you have wealth the idea is you own something so Allah says wa inna lana lalakhirata wal oola, it is only We that actually own the Hereafter and even the earliest; meaning this life and the next, the real owner is Allah Azza wa Jal, the real owner is Allah. So we’ll talk about the two corrections that are being made—one of the self-righteous, and the other of the wretched, in these ayaat.

Then a really interesting and subtle nuance: in the previous surah, fakadhdhabooho fa’aqarooha, the nation of Thamood, they lied against the messenger, number one, and the… the ultimate crime, the high crime they committed was they violated the miracle that Allah had sent to them. They disrespected the miracle that Allah had sent to them by slaughtering the camel, fa’aqarooha. Right. But the first thing was they lied against the truth, and then they committed a crime against the miracle, you could put it this way. In this surah we will write… read alladhi kadhdhaba wa tawalla: the same process, except for the people who are in Quraysh right now, what does Allah Azza wa Jal say? The one who lies against the truth, just like tadhddhabat thamood, fakadhaboohu, in the previous surah, just like that, but now what crime are they gonna commit, it’s not against the she-camel. What is the miracle Allah sent to the Quraysh? It was the Quraan. So how… what… what is the crime against the Quraan? Wa tawalla, and he turned away. Turned away from what? Turned away from the Quraan. So the previous surah committed… the previous nation committed a crime against one miracle of Allah, the she-camel, and this nation is committing a crime against another miracle of Allah, the Quraan itself. And a beautiful contrast has been made. In the previous situation, Allah’s demand on the kuffaar, on the people was, ‘Stay away from the she-camel. Stay away from it.’ And they rebelled against Allah and went towards it and attacked it. And in the case of Quraan Allah is not saying ‘Stay away from Quraan,’ He’s saying ‘Come towards the Quraan’ and they’re doing the exact opposite, they’re staying away from it. So this contrast has been established in these words. The other thing is, the messenger, Saleh alayhis salaam, he warned the people in the previous surah, we talked about the ayah, you know, fa qaala lahum rasoolullahe naaqatallah… naqatallah! Watch out! This is the she-camel of Allah! Wasuqqyaha, and it’s place of drink, be careful, don’t… so he was warning them, he was warning them. In this surah, a step further is taken, in which Allah Himself says I’ve warned you: fa andhartukum naaran talazza. Don’t even think the Messenger is warning you, sallallaho ‘alayhe wa sallam, like Saleh warned his nation, don’t think like that, it is actually Me who’s warning you through these words. Don’t think these are the words of a man, these are My words. So this incredible warning has been given directly to the people of the Quraysh, a step far beyond even the warning given by Saleh alayhis salaam to his nation. Interestingly, also in the previous surah we heard the word al-ashqa… al-ashqa… idhin ba’atha ashqaha, when the worst and the most wretched of them got up to try and kill the she-camel, and a gang kind of went behind him and this posse went to do this crime, this is when the messenger warned them. This surah tells us what happens to al-ashqa. So Allah Azza wa Jal says la yaslaha illal ashqa… Fa andhartuikum naran talazza, la yaslaha illa ashqa. Same exact word, no… this is no accident. Allah says no one will throw themselves into the fire, into this blazing, flaming fire, except al-ashqa. So their behavior was mentioned in the previous surah and the consequence of that behavior is mentioned in this surah. And, by the way, in the previous surah the consequence was mentioned, but in dunya. What was the consequence in dunya? Fa damdama ‘alaihim rabbuhum bidhanbihim fa sawwaha. That when Allah crushed them and destroyed them and levelled the ground with them. Meaning He… He sunk them into the ground as a people. When Allah talked about that destruction upon them where was that? In this dunya. But that’s not enough, there’s another side to it, which is the aakhira, the next side, and that’s being mentioned here, la yaslaha illal ashqa.

Then we find in the previous surah Allah Azza wa Jal mentions at the end… He mentions His punishment against the people, He mentions his punishment: fadamdama ‘alaihim rabbuhum bidhanbihim fasawwaha. In this surah He mentions how He protects the people, wa sayujannabuhal atqa. He… He wards off, He pulls you aside, away from the… the direction of harm, the most righteous of the people, the most fearful of the people. So Allah’s destructive attitude towards one nation is mentioned in the previous, and Allah’s protective attitude towards the righteous is mentioned in contrast in the conclusion of this surah.

In the previous surah Allah Azza wa Jal mentioned that He doesn’t care about the consequences, wa la yakhafu uqbaha… wala yakahafu uqba, this is His attitude against the wretched. And in this surah, at the end, He explicates, He explains His attitude towards the righteous when He says wa lasawfa yarda… wa lasawfa yarda. He’ll soon be very pleased, he’ll soon be pleased. So on the one hand His attitude towards the wretched in the previous surah; and here the attitude towards the righteous, wa lasawfa yarda, in this surah; subhanAllah.

Similarly, Allah Azza wa Jal mentions in the… and this is an amazing contrast… when Allah mentioned punishment in the previous surah, He quantified it, and what was the quantifiable phrase? We repeated it before: fa damdama ‘alaihim rabbuhum bidhanbihim fasawwaha, their Lord crushed them. And you know the verb’s damdama, we discussed that last time. Sawwaha: we discussed that. These are the quantifiable punishments. But when it comes to the reward, Allah doesn’t even put a quantity on it. What does He say? Wa ma li ahadin ‘indahu min ni’matin tujjza… wa lasawfa yarda. Soon he’ll be pleased. Allah doesn’t even say I’ll give him this much then he’ll be pleased. Allah just says ‘he’ll be pleased’. What does that mean? That means you can’t even imagine how much you’ll get, but know one thing: it is *so* much that you’ll be pleased, that this person will be pleased. Yarda, he’ll be pleased. SubhanAllah, he’ll be content. There’d be nothing left in their imagination: I could’ve gotten more. There’s something more I could’ve acquired. That thought won’t occur there in… in their mind because the word yarda is used. So this contrast between limited punishment and unlimited reward, that is being established between these two surahs.

Then finally, before this pair of surahs came… this is, of course, very intricately connected surahs: Suratush Shams and Suratul Layl. Before them we read Surah Balad. And in Suratul Balad, if you remember, there was mention of going up a mountain, right? Fa hadayna hunnajjdain, falaqtahamal ‘aqaba. And we talked about how the righteous path is very difficult, it’s very high and very difficult. But Allah Azza wa Jal seeks to change our attitude about that difficulty. So when He talks about the one doing good deeds, which apparently sounds difficult, what does Allah Azza wa Jal say? Fa sanuyassiruhu lil… yusra. We’ll facilitate for him the easiest thing. Meaning Allah caused that high hill… when you take that journey Allah will Himself would make sure that it becomes the easiest thing for you. That there’s nothing easier than that. And the one who takes the wrong journey, Allah Azza wa Jal makes the toughest, the hardest thing easy for him. The hardest thing would become easy for him and we’ll look into the description of those… those words in shaa Allahu Ta’ala when we get to the ayaat themselves.

Then finally I want to share with you this imagery that Allah establishes of the righteous going, the righteous going… elevating themselves. The righteous elevating themselves. And the… the… the… the wretched putting themselves down. The wretched thinks the more wealth he has, the higher he gets in society, that’s what he thinks. The more wealth he has, the higher he is in society. And Allah is telling the righteous to spend: ‘aata, yu’tee malahu, and even in Surah Balad we found what categories of people to give, right. Fakku raqabatin, ao it’aamun fi yaumin dhi masghaba… masghaba etc., etc. So this idea of giving. Now Allah Azza wa Jal mentions the one who gives is actually the one getting high. Because he’s going up the hill. And the one who acquires wealth, thinking he has become high, what words are used for him? Dassaha, put in the dust. Taradda, you know, falling into a ditch, falling down into a cliff, he’s actually lowering himself. Where actually he thinks he is elevating himself. SubhanAllah. So there’s this contrast being mentioned between the righteous, who put themselves down before Allah because Allah is The Most High; illabtigha’a wajjhi rabbihil ‘ala. Allah being The Most High, they put themselves down, and Allah is elevating them. But the one who puts themselves high, Allah is putting them down. So there’s this beautiful contrast that is described in between these two surahs.

So these were some parallels between the previous surah and this one, now let’s talk a little bit about the layout. The structure of this surah and how it’s organized. By the way what time is maghrib today? I haven’t been around for a week. 8.35, okay. So the layout of this surah: of course this surah begins with a series of aqsam: oaths, which we’ve talked about a number of times now. Wallayle idha yaghsha, wannahare idha tajalla, wa ma khalaqadh dhakara waluntha. When an oath is taken you are being asked to reflect upon each item in the oath, and it will prepare you for what is called jawabal qasm, the response to the oath, the conclusion, the thesis of the oath. Eventually what is coming. Now what is that thesis? The thesis, by the way, usually, is the center of the entire surah. The entire lesson Allah is teaching in a surah is usually the jawabal qasm. So where He says in this surah… He takes these oaths by the night and the day, by male and the female, and how they… how remarkably they’re created, then He gives us the thesis, the fundamental lesson of this surah, what is it? Inna sa’yakum lashatta. Your efforts are truly diverse. Some people are… are working *hard* towards righteousness, others working hard towards being wretched and… and… and vile and in rebellion to Allah. And since this is the thesis of the surah, it should be explained, how do people make these efforts. So the next section of the surah is describing these two paths. So on the one hand you have fa amma man ‘aata wattaqa, wa saddaqa bil husna, fa sanuyassiruhu lilyusra. And on the other hand you have the other kinds of efforts: wa amma man bakhila wastaghna, wa kadhdhaba bilhusna, fa sanuyassiruhu lil’usra. Then of course Allah Azza wa Jal after mentioning these two, He mentions His role in all of this, when He says inna ‘alaina lalhuda, wa inna lana lal akhirata wal oola. Meaning these two people are working in their own directions, but they should know guidance is His possession, it is upon Him to guide, and we’ll talk about that in more detail today in shaa Allah after the salah, and the other… the other thing that Allah mentions is that He’s in complete ownership of both of them. He knows exactly what they’re doing and He’s in complete control. Because He Himself is the true owner, not only of the Hereafter but of what’s going on here also. You know the believer who does good things expects rewards in the Hereafter, they expect even when they get depressed, what do you tell them: Allah will give you more in the Hereafter. And the disbeliever, when he does vicious things, even if you warn him of the Hereafter he says “well it’s not happening now, is it? It’s not so bad now, I can do whatever I want now.” So they attribute Allah’s role, both in some way, to the Hereafter. But Allah Azza wa Jal lets them know not just the aakhira; waloola, right here, too. Right here Allah is in control also. Allah knows exactly what you’re going through here, what you’re upto here. And the consequences will be here as well as over there. Inna lana lalakhirata waloola.

Then the final part of the surah, the part four of the surah is basically the warning. And in contrast with the previous surah, though Allah says, you know, fa andhartukum naaran talazza, la yaslaha illalashqa, it’s a very interesting kind of warning Allah gives. He says I’m warning you, I’m warning you essentially, we’re not talking about the detail right now, I’m warning you of a fire, I’m warning you of a fire. No one will enter it except the worst, the most wretched. Now what kind of language is that? Allah does not say I’m warning you of the fire and you’re the most wretched. He didn’t say that. La yaslaha illalalshqa; third person. He says I’m warning you, the worst people go in it. Now the… the fact that He didn’t call you the worst but He did say that the worst people go in it, it causes you to think, if the worst people go in it why is He warning me? Why isn’t He warning the worst people, right? What you’re being told is you may not have realized how far down you’ve gotten, figure it out for yourself. Maybe you’ve become al ashqa and you haven’t even realized. Maybe you’ve become the most wretched. You haven’t even realized. So I’m warning you, the worst kinds of people end up there. So in parentheses, what we’re learning here is: you better not have become one of them. And if you have, you better get your act together. La yaslaha illalashqa. And again, in third person, Allah mentions who’ll be saved from it, who’ll be kept completely off, away from the punishment of the fire. It’s beautiful language: sayujannabuhal atqa, the one… the… you know, the most righteous, and the most protected even is the meaning, will be kept *far* off the sight of it. You know how somebody pushes you out of way when a danger comes. Like a car’s coming and you were pushed to the side, to stay safe? Or the mother is crossing the parking lot and the cars are coming so she keeps her children on the side, this is tajneeb, this is what’s called in Arabic a tajneeb; to pull someone far, just far away from danger. Janaba: to pull them away from danger. Or to be on the side, but tajneeb is the, it’s hyperbolized, the taf’eel, it means to keep them *far* away, not even close. You’re all the way into the curb, you’re inside the building, the car goes by and then you go. Right? You’re totally… totally safe. Allah talks about these people who are completely and absolutely safe. So on the one hand, the people who are the most wretched who are gonna throw themselves into it, and on the other hand people who’re gonna be completely safe. And this idea of being far off and safe, is very powerful, because when the people of hellfire haven’t even entered hellfire, they’re just looking at it… they haven’t even entered it yet, they’re close, they’re close. You’ll see the things they say: fa sawfa yad’oo thuboora. He’ll be crying for death, he’ll just be crying for death because he’s in the proximity of hell, not because he is in hell, but because he’s in proximity of it. So it is Allah’s gift, so He says He’ll keep you far from it. So this tajneeb, the yujannabuhal atqa, this is a, an incredible gift of Allah, and then Allah finally concludes with, you know, how is he going to reach this point, where he can be saved. Alladhi yu’ti maalahu yatazakka, wa ma li ahadin ‘indahu min ni’matin tujjza. So we learn from the beginning to end one of the most recurring themes of this surah is wealth. Wealth, wealth, wealth. In the beginning istighna was for wealth. In the beginning ‘ata was for wealth, ‘ata wattaqa. In the beginning we found wa ma yughni anhu maaluhu idha… maal came up again. Then at the end alladhi yu’ti maalahu yatazakka, again wealth, wealth, wealth. So we’re gonna learn in this surah what… in the previous surah Allah told us the one who cleansed it has been successful. And in this surah Allah is gonna tell… teach us, subhanahu wa Ta’ala, if you wanna clean yourself up, it has a lot to do with your attitude towards your wealth. It has a lot to do with how you think about your money. How you think about your house. How you think about the things you own. And if you think about them in a corrupt way there’s not… and by the way, a disclaimer: there’s nothing wrong with owning wealth. There’s nothing wrong with owning wealth. There is something wrong with having wealth not just enter your pocket but enter into your heart. That’s the problem. Right. People can have all the wealth in the world so long as it’s not in their heart. Allah Azza wa Jal, you know, when He talks about the… the… the… the worst kinds of people, and their… He doesn’t just say they have money. He says they love money, they love it. And where’s love? It’s in the heart. Wa innahu lihubbil khaire la shadeed. Right. So… and… and he loves it so much he’s always counting it, right, he’s always compiling it and counting it, alladhi jam’a maalahu wa ‘addada, you’re obsessed with something you love, that’s what you do. So this… this attitude is what’s the center, really the central theme of this surah. And hence we understand the word sa’i in a new light, sa’i means to make an effort, and we’ll talk about that in more detail again, once we go ayah by ayah. What does sa’i mean? To make an effort. People are making an effort in two directions. Either you wanna get wealthy here, or you wanna get wealthy… over there. Now there is a way you can get wealthy in both; it’s hard but you can do it, it’s possible, that you can be wealthy here and you can be wealthy there. But understand that when you concern yourself with worldly assets, in your heart they become the priority. You’re thinking about them more than you’re thinking about the assets, your savings of there, then you’ve become from al-ashqa. Then you’ve turned away, tawalla, the one that’s being described, all right? This… this powerful lesson is going to be the center of this surah. Now bi idhnillah since we still have another fifteen minutes before the salah, we’ll begin the ayah by ayah discussion of this surah.

A’oodho billahe minash shaitanir rajeem

Bismillah irrahmaan irraheem

**Wal layle idha yaghsha**

I… Allah Azza wa jal again… I… He swears by the night, I swear by the night as it covers up. I mentioned before, Allah does not mention what He covers up, because, and this is part of style of this surah, objects are not mentioned. In other words, you’re expected to fill things in. This is one of the great styles of the Quraan. It expects you not to have everything spelled out for you. It doesn’t ex… you… you fill in the blanks yourself. What does it cover up, figure it out. You should know, you’ve already read the previous surah. Right? So this… this attitude of filling the blanks, and filling in, and Allah forcing you to think about things, this is one of those beautiful aspects and features of the Quraan; that we become a people of thought, we’re always thinking. Allah forces us to think, He forces us to think. Similarly, we’ll see this later on too, wannahare idha… and, by the way, as opposed to, as… in regards to yaghsha, what Ash-Shawkani rahima hullah commented on it, he said yu’tee bi zulmatihi ma kana mudee’an, meaning he… it covers with its darkness whatever it… had light on it before. Also, some have commented that the… when Allah mentions night He’s alluding to kufr, to disbelief, and when Allah mentions day, it is an imagery, or an allegory, or He’s alluding to revelation, which comes like light, and it brightens up all… gets… gets rid of all the darkness. Right, so revelation gets rid of disbelief and misguidance just like light gets rid of darkness. Now

**Wannahare idha tajalla**

Aii zahara wal kashafa, wa wadaha li zawalil zulma, allati kanat fillail, dhalika bit-tulooish shams, Ash-Shawkani says. He says when, you know, Allah simply is mentioning the removal of the darkness of the night and how it immediately disappears in no time. It disappears by the manifestation of the day. Now, you know it takes a long time for night to creep up. But the brilliance of day, it happens much, much, much faster. It happens very, very, very quickly; even a little bit of light, and a serious change comes over. But evening is, you know, there’s asr and slowly it’s maghrib and it’s crawling in. And this is almost a parable of iman and kufr. You know disbelief, it doesn’t happen overnight. Corruption in a society, it doesn’t come overnight. It takes a *long* time before it’s, you know, it… the change comes. But if you look at the change of good that the Prophet sallallahu ‘alaihe wa sallam brought; how long did it take? This, the nation was in darkness, in shirk for hundreds of years, and virtually overnight—twenty-three years is nothing in the… in the history of a nation, two decades is nothing, it’s no time at all—complete day manifested. And full manifestation, complete manifestation. Wannahare idha tajalla. Then Allah Azza wa Jal mentions:

**Wa ma khalaqadh dhakara waluntha**

Here we have another discussion on the word ma, it’s a similar discussion to the one we had in the previous surah, when we were studying the verse wassamaai wa ma banaha. Walardi wa ma tahaha. The word ma. The word ma could be understood, linguistically it could be understood, as ma al-mawsoola; it’s called ma al-mawsoola. And it’s also to be understood as ma masdariyyah. Now what does that mean? Ma al mawsoola means this statement is saying, and… and what it really means is, And I swear by The One, how Awesome is The One, what kind of Lord is this, what kind of Entity is this, That could create the male and the female. So ma which means literally What, What Powerful Being must this be, and I swear by that Powerful Being that He created the male and the female. This is ma, this is when you… when you consider this ma al mawsoola. But if you say this is ma masdariyya, then the emphasis is not on the creator but on the creation itself. So the meaning would become: how incredibly powerful, how incredible, you know, awe-inspiring the creation of the male and the female.

Here again Allah said male and female, He didn’t say, for example, just directly, He didn’t say man and woman. Dhakar and untha can be used for pretty much any creature that has male and female gender. So Allah opened up the scope. Just like yaghsha was left open, tajalla was left open, male and female is left open. So Allah created male and female out of animals, Allah Azza wa Jal created male and female out of human beings, plants etc., etc. Now thing is, these pairs that are being mentioned, there’s a profound lesson in them that Amin Ahsan Islahi rahimAllahu comments on. That’s really beautiful. That this… this pairing, we learn Allah Azza wa Jal says wa min kulli sha’in khalaqna zawjain. We created every… from everything, We created a pair. And you know if you think about a pair, night in and of itself would be destruction. And Allah mentions what if I only had night for you. What if the night became sarmadan, just… it lasted, it wouldn’t go away. How would… what a travesty that would be for you. What if day never went away, how difficult life would be for you. So one necessitates the existence of the other. Male by itself is incomplete, life can’t continue. Female by itself, incomplete, it can’t continue. And even in our psyche you know, men, they… they… one of the things that, you know we have tendencies, men have tendencies in them that are very corrupt also, like we have tendencies towards violence and rage and all of these things. Who calms those tendencies down? Women. Our mothers, our sisters, our wives etc. etc., they calm these tendencies down. Each has even psychological tendencies, psychological weaknesses that the other fulfils. Women have psychological weaknesses that men fulfil. Men have psychological weaknesses that women fulfil. Men have physical, you know, compatibility with females, not just physical, but a psychological one too. SubhanAllah. How amazingly complementary they are, just like the night and the day is complementary.

But we’re learning something profound, if everything is in pairs, then every… you know, this life in itself must have a pair. There’s life over here, and it must be paired. This by itself can’t be complete. This must be complete only when it meets its other half. What’s its other half? Inna lana lal-aakhirata wal oola. The hereafter. So the hereafter becomes a necessary pair to this worldly life. In this worldly life you have night and day, you have male and female, and they’re reminding you everything is incomplete by just by itself, it needs a pair to complete it. Well this life itself, this world itself is in half, is half, is incomplete, and what will complete it is the life of the next world. SubhanAllah. So dunya paired with aakhira.

**Inna sa’yakum lashatta**

No doubt, your efforts, *your* efforts, the efforts of all of you; remember we said in this surah the person is changed to second person from the previous surah which was third person. So Allah is talking to the nation directly. Interestingly, in the previous surah, Allah was talking to… about Thamood. In distant nation… they… He would talk about them as they. They’re gone. But now all of a sudden in the next surah, the warnings and the… the… the description of your state is not in the third person, it’s about you. Those lessons… you were being prepared, you were being prepared. You are now ready for this lesson directly. So Allah is turning his attention towards the Quraysh in this surah. Inna sa’yakum lashatta. Some mufassiroon have looked at the word kum and have interpreted it in multiple ways. One is that it’s addressing the Muslims. That the efforts of the Muslims, they are many, but in the end they complement each other. Most mufassiroon however, have said that our efforts being diverse, as is said in the ayah inna sa’yakum lashatta—sa’i, by the way, is to pace really fast. There are many words for running in Arabic, sa’i means… it’s not… it’s faster than walking, slower than running, it’s pacing. Okay? And you know we learned this word previously in another surah, you know thumma addbara yas’a, we read thumma addbara yas’a for Fir’awn, we read this word before too. So pacing meaning concerning yourself, and working quickly and… and… and urgently towards something. This is when somebody paces. When do you see somebody pacing? At the bus-stop. When do you see somebody pacing? Through your office building. When they have some really important thing they have to do. And they’re not quite running, and they’re not quite walking either, but they’re moving quickly because there’s… there’s something concerning them, right? Allah says these concerns you have that you’re running towards and pacing towards, they are all over the place, la shatta. So Allah is describing the contrast of night and day, and the contrast of male and female, how these things are contradictory, just like that your efforts are contradictory.

They’re all over the place. In a religious sense, and in a non-religious sense also. In the religious sense we would say, for example, that you know, you have, you know the Muslims are making efforts for the establishment of deen, for the victory of deen. And the non-Muslims are making efforts to what direction? In the destruction of deen. To harm the deen and its teachings. Right? So the two are making efforts in opposite, opposing directions. But then in dunya also. Every one of us has a different job, different responsibility, it seems like we’re all headed in a different direction. Everyone of is headed in some other direction. Each one of us has our own problems.

But the word shatta is really beautiful and remarkable. There are two words in Arabic for diverse or different. In Quraan, anyway. Mukhtalif… mukhtalif and shatta. Mukhtalif is two very different things. Shatta is something that was once one, and it was shattered and now it’s become dispersed. So what we’re learning is humanity and our efforts were supposed to be one. They were… they were supposed to be one. Kanannasu ummatan wahida. And humanity, altogether, used to be one nation. It used to be united. So our efforts are supposed to be one. And the fact that they’re diverse, it still… they come together at the end to become part of the whole. That’s what we’re learning by the use of the word shatta here. Just like night and day come together to become part of the whole, our efforts, even the efforts of the disbelievers against the efforts of the believers, are part of a larger plan. Just like day and night come together, male and female come together, these opposite forces also come together. They’re part of a larger plan. This changes the way we look at the seerah of the Prophet sallallahu ‘alaihe wasallam. It changes the way we look at the efforts of those who tried to hurt Islam. It’s all part of the process, it’s part of the process. So in other words, you have the people, you know, offending and oppressing the Messenger of Allah sallallahu ‘alaihe wasallam and those who believe, radiallahu ta’ala anhum ajjma’een, they’re oppressing them, and those are their efforts. And the sahaba they’re making efforts to spread this deen, to spread its message. And they’re being… two opposite efforts. But if these efforts don’t collide then the ayaat don’t come down that command them to have sabr. And the instructions don’t come down for them to go and make hijrah. All the events of the life of the Prophet sallallahu ‘alaihwe wasallam are not the result of one direction efforts. Like it’s not just the effort of the believers. What else is going on? A conflicting effort of disbelievers. That’s what creates the situation. So it’s part of a larger plan. Don’t complain about it, understand it’s part of the plan, it’s part of the test. SubhanAllah. Inna sa’yakum lashatta. But then you have to figure out what side of this are you on, and we’ll close with this ayah, in shaa Allahu Ta’ala.

By the way shatta, you should know one more thing about it. Shatta is the plural of shateet, in Arabic. Shateet. Which also means broken and dispersed, it’s the plural of it. And the antonym, the ??? of it is ta’leef, allafa. Like Allah says fa allafa baina quloobikum; it’s to take pieces of something that were broken up and put them perfectly back together and to fuse them and make them unbreakable again. Allah uses that word describing the hearts of the believers. Fa allafa baina quloobikum, that’s the opposite of the word shatta. Its ta’leef. Okay? And by the way this word shatta will come up again in a different form later on in another surah when we’re going to read yauma idhin yasdurun naasu ashtata. Same word will come up again in a different morphology form, in shaa Allah.

Another thing about the use of the word shatta—we should probably end on the word shatta and then take a break for the salah—is we said shatta is something that was originally together and then it was broken apart. Look at the oaths that came before, how beautiful the placement of this word is. When Allah talks about day, He says wa ayatul lahumul layl, naslakhu minhunnahar: a miraculous, a special miraculous sign for them is night. We snatch the day out of it, we pull the day out of it. So Allah is describing day being broken away from night. Just like the word shatta means something that is originally one and it’s broken up. Then Allah says wa ma khalaqadh dhakara waluntha. Where did untha come from, where did our mother Hawa come from? Wasn’t she broken away from Adam ‘alaihis salam? Right? So the word shatta is really, really articulate and beautiful here because it complements the lessons that are coming in the beginning of the surah, wa layle idha yaghsha, wannahare idha tajalla, wa ma khalaqadh dhakara wal untha. SubhanAllah. How Allah Azza wa Jal uses these remarkable, remarkable words, not just to describe our situation, but our situations you’ll find parables for them in nature. You find lessons for life and the struggle of Muslim in the things that are around you. Allah Azza wa Jal changes the way we think about the world around us. May Allah Azza wa Jal give us an ability to… to properly reflect on the Quraan and sunnah of His Messenger sallallahu’alaihe wasallam. We’ll continue with ayah number five after the break. Subhanakallahumma wa bihamdik, nashhadu anla ilaaha illa anta, nastaghfiruka wa natoobu ilaika.