This is one of my most beloved surahs of the Quran because it became known to me at a time when I most needed it. It was the spring of 2005... I had been listening to the tafseer of the Quran for more than a year and had reached the 18th chapter, but quite often it seemed to me like my heart was still not free from negative and depressive thoughts. And it used to hurt me a lot that why the Quran is not having a permanent healing effect on me. Why did I keep falling back to the same self-pity and hopelessness... so one night when I couldn’t sleep due to restlessness and anxiety, I just picked a book lying on my shelf, thinking that by reading a few pages I might be able to find some peace... the book was about the life of the Prophet (s.a.w) and I started reading the same page where it had opened on its own. At first I couldn’t properly focus on the words but after a few lines there was an excerpt from the translation of the Quran which held my heart with its stunning effect...

By the morning brightness, and by the night when it covers with darkness,

It was Surah Ad-Dhuha and I felt like it was a special message for me, coming directly from Allah... full of hope and love; reminding me that just as there are happy times full of light and life, similarly Allah puts us through difficult times in which there seems to be no light and no hope... but they are both a test... the bright times are a test of our gratitude and appreciation and likewise the hard times are a test of our faith and patience...

Most of us are deceived by the devil when we face any disappointment in life. The devil makes us think that it is a sign of Allah’s displeasure or that He doesn’t care for us... whereas the fact is that Allah never forsakes a true believer... and we should never lose hope in His mercy:

Your Rabb has neither forsaken you (O Muhammad), nor is He displeased.

We have all experienced that the good times pass by too quickly but the difficult phases in life seem endless. Here Allah is giving us hope that even though the problems might seem bigger than mountains but Allah is bigger than every other thing. So He can solve all issues
no matter how impossible they might seem to us. The road to Allah’s pleasure and forgiveness is full of hurdles but the end is very sweet:

وَلِلَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْقُرْآنَ لِيُخْلِصُواْ عَمَلَهُمْ وَلِيُذْكَرُواْ رَبٍّهُمُّ ۛ فَتُرِضَّىٌ} {5

Certainly the later period shall be better for you than the earlier. Soon your Rabb shall grant you something with which you will be well-pleased.

Going back in the memory lane, I remember that these words were enough to open my eyes and I understood that my depression was nothing but an illusion created by the devil and I was trapped in it due to the weakness of my own self. I realized that if I wanted to get rid of these illusions then I will have to strengthen my faith in Allah by focusing on the understanding of the Quran and being conscious in my Salat and duas. Just making this decision in my heart I seemed to be filled with a new energy... as if all of a sudden the darkness was replaced with a brilliant light. And when I read on to the next words, I was so moved by their truth that I started crying:

{6

Did He not find you an orphan and sheltered you?

I cried because I felt the sadness of the small child who had been born to a widowed mother and she too left him at the tender age of 6... That was how our beloved Prophet (s.a.w) started his life... but then we see that he grew up to be a man full of truth and honesty. There are no traces of self pity in his brilliant character. Who gave him this confidence? The same Allah who guided Him to the ultimate truth:

{7

Did He not find you lost and gave you guidance?

My tears were not only for the Prophet (s.a.w) but also for realizing the truth about my own life. For the first time I realized that the same Allah who cared for His Prophet (s.a.w) was caring for me, and the same Allah who guided him was giving me the gift of guidance too... Allah has given us the same Quran which was revealed on the heart of His prophet (s.a.w) but how many times have we been really grateful for this great gift? We cry for petty little deprivations of life because we don’t know the value of the Quran and its guidance, which we keep ignoring. Hasn’t Allah given us so much that we cannot even count?
Did He not find you poor and made you self-sufficient?

We keep worrying over things which we don’t have. Or sometimes we feel proud of having so many blessings. But very few people realize that all blessings are a test. On the day of Judgement we will not be given any reward for what we had in life; but it will be seen how we used those gifts to please Allah... that is the real test. Therefore Allah is reminding us of some very important duties:

Therefore, do not treat the orphan with harshness

When we see any helpless person, we tend to feel superior... so we have to correct this attitude by thinking that we could also have been in the same situation. Therefore we should express our gratitude to Allah by being extra nice and helpful to the orphans and other needy people:

And as for the beggar; do not repel him

And finally Allah reminds us of our most important responsibility:

And as for the bounty of your Rabb; express it.

Normally we are all the time grumbling and complaining about “how hard life is” but Allah is telling us here that we should not only focus on what we have, but also express it. And our greatest thanks should be for the greatest gift... and that is the gift of guidance. We should tell the whole world about the miracle of Quran and how it changes our life and gives us the hope of eternal success... may Allah guide us all to that beautiful destination... ameen