

Fast 10

Seeking comfort in, and strength through, prayer:

“So (O Prophet) bear patiently what they say, and celebrate the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify (Him) during the hours of the night and parts of the day, that you may be well pleased. And do not strain your eyes (with desire) at what We have provided different classes of them with — the splendour of this world’s life — that We may try them by means of it. And the sustenance of your Lord is better and more lasting. And enjoin prayer on your people, and steadily adhere to it. We do not ask from you a sustenance. We provide for you. And the (good) end is for guarding against evil.” — 20:130–132

Notes: To bear patiently all manner of persecution, opposition and abuse, the Holy Prophet is told to glorify the Lord, in prayer. He is told not to be overawed by the opponent’s material possessions or regard them as a mark of success. The sustenance of the soul through prayer is far preferable than mere material gain.

“So be patient; surely the promise of Allah is true; and ask protection for your sin and celebrate the praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning.” — 40:55

Note: “protection for your sin” means that the Holy Prophet sought God’s protection from committing any wrongful act, even unintentionally.

“(O Prophet) Rise to pray by night except a little, half of it, or lessen it a little, or add to it, and recite the Quran (distinctly) at a leisurely pace. Surely We shall charge you with a weighty word. The rising (to pray) by night is surely the firmest way to tread and most effective in speech. Truly you have by day prolonged occupation.” — 73:2–10

Notes: The praying at night is here described as being firstly *the firmest way to tread* — to tread the way of *Life*, to tread upon all evil inclinations — and, secondly, *the most effective in speech* — what one says to other people becomes most effective. The speaker, the inviter to Truth, has his heart strengthened with force Divine through his lengthened devotions in the still of the night, and his word therefore carries the Divine force with it and enters the hearts of those who listen to him. Thus the night devotion, we are told, gives a man the strength to do the greatest deeds and makes him perfect, giving him at the same time strength to make others perfect because his words, coming out of a sincere heart, which bows to none but God, carry conviction to the hearts of others. Thus was the Prophet fortified doubly, in his deeds as well as in his words, to carry his message to other people, and thus should his true followers try to get strength from the same Divine source in the

dead of night, when all veils between man and God are removed by utter silence prevailing everywhere, the only cry being the cry of the devotee. The Divine light in its full brilliance then illumines the heart of man and the heart of man reflects that light and illumines the world.

The above comment was written by Maulana Muhammad Ali, who was himself devoted to praying at night. It is therefore written by one who was practising and experiencing what he is describing here.
