

(Note: Wherever the word “you” or “your” is singular and refers to one human being, it is printed with an italic y, as in: you. Wherever such a word refers to God, the y is printed in capital, as in: You.)

For Fast 29

Chapter 73

Al-Muzzammil: The one covering himself up

1 O you covering yourself up,

Note: The Holy Prophet Muhammad is here called *Muzzammil*, one who had wrapped himself up in his garments. The explanation is that the Prophet wrapped himself up in his clothes on receiving the Call, his first revelation. He is reported to have come back home trembling after his first spiritual experience, and to have said to his wife *zammilu-ni, zammilu-ni, cover me, cover me*. The Prophet is told that he should not fear or tremble on account of the tremendous responsibility placed on him of reforming humanity, but should seek the help of God, through prayer to Him, the most effective prayer being prayer in the night, when the world is asleep.

2 rise to pray by night except a little,

3 half of it, or lessen it a little,

4 or add to it, and recite the Quran (distinctly) at a leisurely pace.

Note: Maulana Muhammad Ali writes in his Urdu commentary on Bukhari as follows. “This means reciting so as to enunciate the letters distinctly and to read the words slowly in order that attention is turned to its meaning. The instruction to read the Quran slowly, so that it moves the heart, is found not only in Hadith but is also clearly given in the Quran.”

The Maulana adds that to read the Quran hurriedly and to finish it at high speed is clearly opposed to this instruction of the Quran.

5 Surely We shall charge you with a weighty word.

Note: Being burdened with the guidance of the whole world was indeed a weighty word, the weightiest word with which any human being has been charged in the whole history of humanity.

- 6 The rising (to pray) by night is surely the firmest way to tread and most effective in speech.

Note: The praying at night is *the firmest way to tread* — to tread the way of *Life*, to tread upon all evil inclinations — and it is *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, 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.

- 7 Truly you have by day prolonged occupation.

Note: Curiously, the Prophet is told that because he is too busy during the day so he must *rise* at night for prayer, rather than *rest* at night to refresh himself for the onerous daily work!

- 8 And remember the name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with (complete) devotion.
- 9 The Lord of the East and the West — there is no god but He — so take Him for Protector.
- 10 And bear patiently what they say and turn away from them with a dignified withdrawal.

Note: The Holy Prophet is told here to bear the abusive language of his opponents patiently and to turn away from the foul-mouthed abusers in a dignified way; in other words, not to fall to their level. This is guidance to all Muslims on how to respond in the face of offensive comment about the Holy Prophet.

11 And leave Me and the deniers, possessors of plenty, and give them respite for a little while.

Note: It is Allah Who decides their fate. Their fate should not be taken into human hands by impetuous and hot-headed followers of the faith.