

Surah 73. Al-Muzzammil

73.1 O thou folded in garments! ⁵⁷⁵⁴

73.2 Stand (to pray) by night but not all night ⁵⁷⁵⁵

73.3 Half of it or a little less

73.4 Or a little more; and recite the Qur'an in slow measured rhythmic tones. ⁵⁷⁵⁶

73.5 Soon shall We send down to thee a weighty Message. ⁵⁷⁵⁷

73.6 Truly the rising by night is most potent for governing (the soul) and most suitable for (framing) the Word (of Prayer and Praise). ⁵⁷⁵⁸

73.7 True there is for thee by day prolonged occupation with ordinary duties: ⁵⁷⁵⁹

73.8 But keep in remembrance the name of the Lord and devote thyself to Him wholeheartedly.

73.9 (He is) Lord of the East and the West: there is no god but He: take Him therefore for (thy) Disposer of Affairs. ⁵⁷⁶⁰

73.10 And have patience with what they say and leave them with noble (dignity).

73.11 And leave Me (alone to deal with) those in possession of the good things of life who (yet) deny the Truth; and bear with them for a little while. ⁵⁷⁶¹

73.12 With Us are Fetters (to bind them) and a Fire (to burn them) ^{5762 5763}

73.13 And Food that chokes and a Penalty Grievous. ^{5764 5765}

73.14 One Day the earth and the mountains will be in violent commotion and the mountains will be as a heap of sand poured out and flowing down. ⁵⁷⁶⁶

73.15 We have sent to you (O men!) an apostle to be a witness concerning you even as We sent an apostle to Pharaoh. ⁵⁷⁶⁷

73.16 But Pharaoh disobeyed the apostle; so We seized him with a heavy Punishment. ⁵⁷⁶⁸

73.17 Then how shall ye if ye deny (Allah) guard yourselves against a Day that will make children hoary-headed? ⁵⁷⁶⁹

73.18 Whereon the sky will be cleft asunder? His Promise needs must be accomplished.

73.19 Verily this is an Admonition: Therefore whoso will let him take a (straight) path to his Lord! ⁵⁷⁷⁰

73.20 The Lord doth know that thou standest forth (to prayer) nigh two-thirds of the night or half the night or a third of the night and so doth a party of those with thee. But Allah doth appoint Night and Day in due measure. He knoweth that ye are unable to keep count thereof. So He hath turned to you (in mercy): read ye therefore of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you. He knoweth that there may be (some) among you in ill-health; others travelling through the land seeking of Allah's bounty; yet others fighting in Allah's Cause. Read ye therefore as much of the Qur'an as may be easy (for you); and establish regular Prayer and give regular Charity; and loan to Allah a Beautiful Loan. And whatever good ye send forth for your

souls Ye shall find it in Allah's presence yea better and greater in Reward. And seek ye the Grace of Allah:
for Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful. **5771 5772 5773 5774 5775 5776 5777**

Author Comments

5754 - Muzzammil: Some Commentators understand by this, "properly dressed for prayer", or "folded in a sheet, as one renouncing the vanities of this world. Muzzammil is one of the titles of our holy Prophet. But there is a deeper meaning in this and the address "Thou wrapped up" of the next Sura. Human nature requires warm garments and wrappings to protect the body from cold or heat or rain. But in the spiritual world these wrappings are useless: the soul must stand bare and open before Allah, in the silence of the night, but not too austere, as the following verses show.

5755 - The Prophet was prone to austerities in the cave of Hira, both before and after he received his mission, spending days and nights in prayer and contemplation. Midnight and after-midnight prayers have technically received the name of Tahajjud. See also verse 20 below; also xvii. 79.

5756 - At this time there was only S. xcvi., S. lxxviii, and possibly S. lxxiv, and the opening Sura (Al-Hamd). For us, now, with the whole of the Qur-an before us, the injunction is specially necessary. The words of the Qur-an must not be read hastily, merely to get through so much reading. They must be studied, and their deep meaning pondered over. They are themselves so beautiful that they must be lovingly pronounced in rhythmic tones.

5757 - The Qur-an as completed by degrees, after the Fatra (see Introduction to this Sura).

5758 - For contemplation, prayer, and praise, what time can be so suitable as the night, when calm and silence prevail, the voices of the market-place are still, and the silent stars pour forth their eloquence to the discerning soul.

5759 - A prophet of Allah, as a man, a member of a family, or a citizen, has many ordinary duties to perform; and his work may be made difficult and irksome in protecting those who listen to his preaching and are therefore molested and persecuted by the world. But while discharging all his ordinary duties, he should work as in the presence of Allah, and in all matters and at all times retain the sense of Allah's nearness. His work may be on earth, but his heart is in Heaven.

5760 - Allah is Lord of all places. He rules the world. Therefore be not discouraged by the plots or enmity of wicked men. Leave all things to Allah; trust Him; He is just and will do justice. Only turn away from the unjust, but in a worthy and noble way; i.e., to show them clearly that you do not fear them, but that you leave all affairs in Allah's hands. If we divide the world into hemispheres from north to south, "East and West" will cover all directions.

5761 - Men who enjoy the good things of life have special cause for gratitude to Allah, Who bestowed them. When they are in the ranks of Allah's enemies, none but Allah can adequately deal with them.

5762 - Cf. xiii. 5; xxxiv. 33; xi. 71 and lxix. 30-32.

5763 - Cf. xliv. 47 and lvi. 94.

5764 - Cf. xliv. 43; lvi. 52; lxix. 36-37, and lxxxviii. 6.

5765 - In general terms, the Penalty of sin may be described as a Penalty Grievous, an Agony. It may come in this very life, but that in the Hereafter is certain! See next verse. We can also consider punishments from another aspect. The first object of punishment is to protect the innocent from the depredations of the criminal: we have to bind him. The next object is to produce in his heart the fire of repentance, to consume his evil proclivities and to light his conscience. Where that is not enough, a more drastic punishment for the callous is something which causes him pain in things which ordinarily cause him pleasure, such as food, drink, and the satisfaction of physical needs. People in whom the higher spiritual faculties are dead may perchance be awakened through the lower physical features of their life, which appeal to them. Where this also fails, there is finally the complete agony, a type too terrible to contemplate.

5766 - The Judgment is described as a violent commotion which will change the whole face of nature as we know it. Even the hard rock of mountains will be like loose sand running without any cohesion.

5767 - Our holy Prophet has to warn his age, i.e., the present age, reclaim it from sin, and be a witness for the righteous and against evil, as Moses did his office in his age. For Pharaoh, his arrogance, and his punishment, see x. 75-92.

5768 - Pharaoh the earthly king faces Moses the prophet of Allah. In earthly eyes it was Moses who disobeyed Pharaoh. In spiritual relations, it was Pharaoh who disobeyed Moses. Pharaoh represented an ancient and mighty kingdom, with a long history behind it, and a pride in its learning and science, art, organisation, and power. Moses led a depressed people, hewers of wood and drawers of water. But the might of Allah was behind him. What became of the wisdom, power, and armies of Pharaoh? They were rent asunder when the day came, and the terror and surprise must have been the same as if the heavens had been rent asunder, and children's hair had turned grey! But formidable revolutions turn children grey-haired in another way. Nations that were as children became wise before they in their turn decayed, and from similar disobedience to the laws of Allah. For Allah's law must stand and be fulfilled when all else is swept away.

5769 - If already you deny and disobey Allah in this life of probation, how can you stand up to the Day of Judgment, the Day of the terrible Reality? That Day is described in two metaphors: (1) It will be a time of such stress that even children will become like hoary-headed men; (2) What we look upon as the eternal sky, ever the same, will be cleft asunder; cf. lxxxii. 1. In other words, the shape of things will be completely altered, both within man and in outer nature, and all true values will be restored. For the Promise of Allah, in this as in all other respects, cannot but be fulfilled.

5770 - This is no empty threat. It is an admonition for your good. If you have the will, you can at once come for the Grace and Mercy of Allah, and obtain it. For Repentance and Amendment are the straight Way to the nearness of Allah.

5771 - Cf., above, lxxiii. 24. The Prophet, and a zealous band of his disciples, were often up, two-thirds of the night, or a half, or a third, rejecting sleep and giving themselves up to Prayer and Praise and the reading of the Qur-an. They are told that this was too severe a tax on them, especially if their health was affected, or they were on a journey, or they were striving, with might and main, in other ways, for the cause of Allah. See die fines following.

5772 - The usual meaning taken is that the counting of the exact hours of night and day may not be

possible for ordinary people, in order to determine exactly the half, or the third, or the two-thirds of a night. The length of the night and the day varies every day of the solar year, and the precise hour of midnight can only be determined by exact observation in clear skies or by chronometers, which is not possible for everyone. But I understand it in a wider meaning. Allah fixes night and day in due proportions; for rest and work, and according to seasonal variations. For prayer and praise no meticulous observations of that kind are necessary or possible. Allah's service can be done in many ways as detailed below. But we must give some time to devotion, as may be most easy and convenient to us, in various circumstances of health, travel, and the performance of various duties.

5773 - The reading of the Qur-an here is a part of Prayer and religious devotion. This is not to be made into an obsession or a burden. Cf. xx. 2: "We have not sent down the Qur-an to thee to be an occasion for thy distress." We must do it whole-mindedly, but not by formal mechanical computations.

5774 - This refers to Jihad. The better opinion is that this particular verse was revealed in Madinah, long after the greater part of the Sura. The reference, further on, to canonical Prayers and regular Charity (Zakat), points to the same conclusion.

5775 - Cf. ii. 2456, and n. 276, where the meaning of "a Beautiful Loan" is explained. See also lvii. 18. The "Beautiful Loan" should be that of our own souls. We should expect no returns in kind, for that is not possible. But the reward we shall find with Allah will be infinitely greater and nobler. Cf. the biblical phrase, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matt. vi. 20).

5776 - Any good that we do raises our own spiritual status and dignity. We must not think that when we speak of Allah's service or Allah's Cause, we are doing anything for His benefit: He is independent of all needs whatsoever.

5777 - This emphasizes the need of Allah's Grace. Whatever good we do, our own merits are comparatively small. Allah's Grace must lift us up and blot out our shortcomings. Even in piety there may be an arrogance which may become a sin. We should always seek Allah's Mercy in all humility.

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