

### Fast 10: The Prophet should seek comfort and strength through prayer

- To be able to bear patiently all kinds of persecution, opposition and abuse, the Holy Prophet is told to seek comfort in 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.” — 20:130–131

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ  
الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا وَمِنْ أَنَاءِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ  
وَآخِرَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَىٰ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ  
عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ  
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ  
وَأَبْقَىٰ ﴿١٣١﴾

The words “celebrate the praise of your Lord” mean here the act of prayer. The times of the regular daily prayers are also indicated here in the mention of the rising and setting of the sun and parts of the night and the day.

It also says here that the Holy Prophet should not be overawed and impressed by the material possessions of his opponents or regard these as signs of their success. These are, in fact, meant to try them to see if they use them for good purposes or bad purposes. The sustenance of the soul through prayer is far preferable than mere material gain, as it is permanent, not fleeting and temporary.

- There are other similar verses addressing the Holy Prophet:

“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

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ  
بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ﴿٥٥﴾

“So bear patiently what they say, and celebrate the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before the setting. And glorify Him in the night and after prostration.” — 50:39–40

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ  
الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ  
وَآدْبَارَ السُّجُودِ ﴿٤٠﴾

While waiting patiently for the promise of success from Allah to be fulfilled, while also bearing the verbal abuse and ridicule from his opponents, the Holy Prophet should continue to pray. The first verse above also requires him to “ask protection for

your sin”. This does not mean that the Holy Prophet had committed any sin for which he must ask forgiveness. It means asking for God’s protection against falling prey to any temptation or weakness that he **felt** within himself or protection against committing any wrongful act, even unintentionally and unknowingly.

The prophets had such a high standard of behaviour for themselves that they were concerned even about any feeling or apprehension in their minds about slipping from that standard and they feared going anywhere near just the thought of commission of a sin. Because of this fear they constantly sought protection with God.

- The Holy Prophet must pray at night for extra strength:

“(O Prophet) Rise to pray by night except a little, half of it, or reduce 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.” — 73:2-7

قُمِ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۖ تَصِفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ  
 قَلِيلًا ۖ أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا ۗ  
 إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ۖ إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ  
 أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا ۗ إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا  
 طَوِيلًا ۗ

The praying at night is here described as being firstly *the firmest way to tread* — to tread the right way in 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 Divine force 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 person the strength to do the greatest deeds and makes him perfect. It gives him, at the same time, strength to make others perfect because his words come out of a sincere heart, which bows to none but God, so they 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. His true followers too should 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 is derived from a writing by Maulana Muhammad Ali, who was himself devoted to praying extra at night. It is therefore written by one who was practising and experiencing what he is describing here.