

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*All Praises to Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful*

25<sup>th</sup> Taraweeh, Ramadan 1446 Hijri

Summary of Verses 73:1-79:46

(Sura Muzzammil is a Makki Sura)

Sura Al-Muzzammil (The Mantled One) (Verses 73:1-20)

In the early days of his prophetic mission, when he was in anguish and deeply unsettled by the responsibility of prophethood, the Prophet (s.a.w) was urged to *"stand to prayer by night, but not all night, half of it, a little less or little more, and recite the Quran in slow, measured, rhythmic tones."* (73:2-4) There would be no time for relaxation because *"We are about to send down to you words of enormous importance."* (73:5)

The Prophet (s.a.w) had no one to turn to but Allah for peace of mind, so he stayed up most nights (*Qiyam-ul-Layl* prayer, half the night, or less, or more). This is further specified in verse 20 as being 2/3 of the night, or 1/2 or 1/3 of the night. He used his time praising, glorifying and trusting Allah, the One True God, to face his polytheist enemies. Praying and reciting in the early hours of dawn are singled out for their special significance. *"Truly the rising by night is most potent for governing the soul and most suitable for framing the word of prayer and praise."* (73:6)

(The importance of *Tahajjud* (literally, 'fight off sleep') prayers (73:1-6), which can be considered a subset of '*Qiyam-ul-Layl*' (literally, 'stand during the night') prayers, and which carry enormous benefits for believers, is emphasized here. Ramadan is the best month to begin this practice, especially for those of us who have deprived ourselves of the manifold blessings of the *Tahajjud* prayers.)

The long, concluding verse of the Sura resonates with mercy, hope and love. It is a verse so evocative and moving that reading it, particularly in the small hours of dawn, can transport us back in time by fourteen centuries to experience the awe of hope and promise that Allah blessed and assured His Prophet with. Note the emphasis on Allah's Grace. Whatever good we do, our own merits are relatively small. It is Allah's Grace that can elevate us and remove our deficiencies. Even in piety, there may be an element of arrogance that may become a sin, which requires that we always seek Allah's Mercy in humility. *"Your Lord knows that you stand forth in prayer two-thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night, and so does a party of those with you. But Allah does appoint night and day in due measure. He knows that you are unable to keep count thereof. So He has turned to you in mercy. Read, therefore, as much of the Quran as may be easy for you. He knows that there may be some among you who are ill; others traveling through the land seeking Allah's bounty; yet others fighting in Allah's cause, Read, therefore, as much of the Quran as may be easy for you, and establish regular prayer and give regular charity, and loan to Allah a beautiful loan. And whatever good you send forth for your souls you shall find it in Allah's presence. Yes, better and greater in reward, and seek Allah's forgiveness, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."* (73:20)

(Sura Muddatthir is a Makki Sura)

Sura Al-Muddatthir (The Cloaked One) (Verses 74:1-56)

The first five verses of Sura *Iqra* (96:1-5) that the Prophet (s.a.w) had received in Mount Hira in 610 (thirteen years before the Hijrah) had shaken him to the core. He was agitated, anxious and afraid. Instead of having a cooling-off period, as it were, Allah instructed the Prophet to get to work and warn polytheist Arabs to give up their idol-worshiping and recognize the One true God. *"O You who are wrapped up in your cloak, arise and give warning, and glorify your Lord, and purify your clothes, and keep away from all*

*abominations and do not expect any increase for yourself in giving, and be patient in the service of your Lord.” (74:1-7)*

Analyzing this verse reveals the following insights: Cleanliness is a sign of faith. Immoral, wicked behavior takes us down the slippery slope. Charity is to be given for the pleasure of Allah alone, not for personal glory. Hardship is inevitable in life but when considered in the proper light, can draw us nearer to Allah. What will see believers through bad times and good is patience in the service of Allah.

The ingrates take Allah’s gifts as entitlements. The more they get, the more they want while heedless of Allah’s signs and revelations. They will suffer the consequences of their attitudes and actions: *“Yet he is greedy, that I should add yet more. By no means! For he is indifferent to Our signs. Soon I shall visit him with calamities.” (74:15-17)*

The Sura draws attention to the natural and cosmological phenomena to emphasize our responsibility and accountability: *“By the moon and by the night as it withdraws and the morning as it reveals itself, surely this is one of the mightiest events. It is a warning to all mankind.” (74:32-36)*

Then follows a list that contrasts the fate of those who are successful in the Sight of Allah and those who are not. How do we elevate ourselves to the rank of the virtuous and the righteous? By shunning the practices of the sinners and replacing them with the practices of the truly successful, as indicated in these verses:

*(74:37) To any of you that choose to press forward or to follow behind*

*(74:38) Every soul will be held in pledge for its deeds*

(We cannot shift our responsibilities to leaders or so-called saints for our misdeeds. Our redemption depends only on the Grace of Allah, for which we

must constantly strive with right conduct and sincere action.)

(74:39) *Except the Companions of the Right Hand*

(74:40-42) *They will be in Gardens of Delight: They will question each other, and ask of the Sinners: "What led you into Hell Fire?"*

(74:43) *They (the sinners) will say: "We were not of those who prayed"*

(Notice how sinners mention neglecting prayers first. Even they are aware of the centrality of prayer to Islam.)

(74:44) *"Nor were we of those who fed the indigent"*

(74:45) *"But we used to talk vanities with vain talkers"*

(74:46) *"And we used to deny the Day of Judgment"*

(74:47) *"Until there came to us the Hour that is certain."*

The last verse of the Sura testifies to Allah's Omnipotence: *"And they will not remember except as Allah wills. He alone is worthy of being mindful of and He alone is worthy of forgiving."* (74:56)

(Sura Qiyamah is a Makki Sura)

Sura Al-Qiyamah (The Resurrection) (Verses 75:1-40)

Allah takes life, and He resurrects it. It is entirely within His power to *"assemble his bones and put together in perfect order the very tip of his fingers."* (75:3-4)

The Quran uses vivid imagery to convey the signs of the Day of Judgment and its effect on human beings. *"Man shall be told on that day of all his deeds, from first to last."* (75:13) (That we will be informed of all the motivations behind our deeds, hidden or manifest, on the Day of Judgment is also stated in many verses, including 5:105, 6:60, 62:8, 64:7.)

Allah tells His prophet not to want to hasten the arrival of the revelation. Allah will reveal His word when the time is right. *"Move not your tongue concerning the Quran to make haste therewith. We shall impart it to you and*

*ensure its recital. So listen to it when it is read and follow its reading. We shall make the meaning clear to you!" (75:16-19)*

This is Allah's promise that the Quran will remain complete and immutable until the end of time.

Before the Day of Judgment, every human being must pass through the temporary phase of death. How conscious are we of this fact? *"But when a man's soul is the top of his chest and those around him cry, 'Can anyone spare him?' when he knows that it is the final parting and the pangs of death assail him, on that day all will be driven to your Lord."* (75:26-30)

Who are the unsuccessful? *"So he gave nothing in charity, nor did he pray. On the contrary, he rejected the Truth and turned away. Then he bragged to his family ..."* (75:31-33) These shortcomings are identified to emphasize that there is a purpose to life, and if we think there isn't any, we are in for a reckoning: *"Do humans think they will be left uncontrolled and without purpose?"* (75:36)

(Sura Dahr – also known by the title Insan (Man) – is a Madani Sura)  
Sura Ad-Dahr (Time) (Verses 76:1-31)

In case man becomes arrogant and full of himself, Allah reminds us: *"Has there not been over man a long period when he was nothing, not even mentioned? Surely We created him from a drop of mingled sperm to try him. So We gave him the gifts of hearing and sight. We showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful."* (76:1-3)

Successful are those who *"... keep their vows and fear a Day whose evil flies far and wide, and they feed, for the love of Allah, the indigent, the orphan ... saying, 'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone. No reward do we desire from you, nor thanks.'" (76:7-9)*

Note that Muslims are required to go beyond what is considered the "Golden Rule" which states: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Instead, when we give to charity, we should not expect any return or reward from the recipients. We must be motivated by the pleasure of Allah alone.

*"It is We Who have sent down the Quran to you in stages," Allah tells the Prophet. "Therefore, be patient with constancy to the Command of your Lord and obey not the sinner or the ingrate among them." (76:23-24) The Prophet (s.a.w) is asked, and by extension his ummah, to "celebrate the name of your Lord, morning and evening, and part of the night, prostrate yourself to Him, and glorify Him a long night through." (76:25-26) For those who love the fleeting life to the exclusion of everything else, "... they love the fleeting life and will face a Day that will be hard." (76:27)*

(Love of the world can veil us from the knowledge of the invisible and the unseen world. We are subject to two opposing forces: the downward pull of materialism and the upward pull of spirituality. Which one wins depends on which one we feed. As flawed human beings, we may occasionally give in to materialism and the quest for fame, power and glory but redemption is always possible through sincere repentance to Allah.)

(Sura Mursalat is a Makki Sura)

Sura Al-Mursalat (Those Sent Forth) (Verses 77:1-50)

The refrain, *"Ah, woe that Day to the rejecters of Truth"* occurs ten times in this Sura of fifty verses. It points out the fate of those on the *"Day of sorting out"* (77:13) who rejected Allah's Truth despite the evidence contained in His signs around them, including the wind (77:1-6), the stars (77:8) and the mountains (77:10). On the day of reckoning, the deniers of Truth *"shall not be able to speak, nor ... plead!"* (77:35-36)

In contrast, *"the righteous shall be in the middle of cool shades and springs of water and fruits, all they desire. Eat and drink to your heart's content on*

*account of your good deeds. Thus do We reward the doers of Good."*  
(77:41-44)

"*Ah, woe to the rejecters of Truth*" underscores the reckoning to be faced by those who deny Allah's Omnipotence and the reality of the Hereafter.

(Sura Naba is a Makki Sura)

Sura An-Naba (The Great News) (Verses 78:1-40)

The 'Great News' is the coming of the Day of Judgment. The Sura comprises four parts.

The first part describes the physical world and our place in it. "*And have We not created you in pairs, and made your sleep for rest, and made the night as a covering, and made the day as a means of subsistence?*" (78:8-11)

(Notice that verse (78:9) makes clear the need to "sleep for rest." In this age of smartphones, social media and artificial intelligence, digital distractions disrupt our lives, particularly when it comes to restful sleep at night. We are now connected to the grid 24x7 for fear of missing out on gossip and tidbits, particularly during the night when we should be sleeping. "Evil is whatever distracts," said Franz Kafka. We owe our body the rest it deserves because our health is a gift from our Creator. Too much screen time interferes with deep sleep because high-intensity light from laptops, tablets and smartphones interferes with melatonin, the hormone that triggers sleepiness. Sleep apnea is a serious disease. Seven to eight hours of restful sleep at night is critical to living a longer and healthier life because we need sleep time for cell repair and maintaining normal memory and brain functions. Short sleep leads to diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and obesity. Regular bedtimes with no digital interruptions in dark, cool and quiet rooms can improve the quality of our sleep. Sleeping pills can be addictive, with serious side effects. Taking a warm bath before calling it a night often leads to restful sleep.

Ramadan is the month in which we may deprive ourselves of regular sleep during the night but only if we use it to remember Allah and plead for His mercy and forgiveness.)

The second part is a brief description of the Day of Judgment: *"The time of the Day of Judgment is fixed. It is when the trumpet is sounded, and you will come forth in droves. And the heavens shall be opened as if there were doors, and the mountains shall vanish as if they were a mirage."* (78:18-20)

The third part describes the punishment awaiting wrongdoers: *"Hell is ready and waiting, a home for the transgressors, where they shall abide for ages."* (78:21-23)

The fourth part describes the rewards awaiting the good and the righteous: *"The righteous will surely triumph. Theirs shall be gardens and vineyards, and splendid companions well-matched."* (78:31-33)

Allah is ever merciful and gives sinners and the astray a chance to repent and redeem themselves: *"That Day is sure to come, and so let him who will, seek a way back to His Lord."* (78:39)

Is Judgment Day near? There are three stages of Judgment: a) Many of our sins and wrongdoings find their penalties in this earthly life that lead to the corrosion of the soul and the conscience. b) Where the penalty is not perceived or visible in this life, death is considered the lesser judgment for each soul. (see, for example, verse 7:37) Death may come to anyone at any time, so we must be ready for it. c) Then there is the Final Judgment when the present order completely passes away and we awaken to a New World where time as we knew it ceases to exist. Even the Final Judgment may be quite near and we must prepare for it, for it will be too late then for repentance. These ideas are summarized in the final verse of the Sura: *"Surely We have warned you of a chastisement near, the Day when man will*



*see the deeds which his hands have sent forth, and the unbelievers will say, 'Woe unto me! Would that I were mere dust!'" (78:40)*

(Sura Naziat is a Makki Sura)

Sura An-Naziat (Verses 79:1-46) (Those Who Tear Out)

Angels of death differentiate between sinners and the virtuous at the time the mortal life ends: *"By the angels who tear out (the souls of the wicked) with violence; By those who gently draw out the souls of the blessed" ... (79:1-2)*

Disbelievers deny that the dead shall ever be brought back to life. *"They say: 'What! Shall we indeed be returned to our former state? What? When we shall have become rotten bones?'" (79:10-11)* But then they acknowledge: *"They say: 'In that case, our return will be a total loss!'" (79:12)*

The parable of Pharaoh, with its lessons of pride and fall, is a warning for tyrants and oppressors: *"But Allah did punish him and made an example of him in the Hereafter as in this life." (79:25)*

The important thing to realize is that there are modern Pharaohs in all nations and among all groups, tyrants and narcissists who are averse to justice and mercy and trample the rights of others with no thought of accountability. As the Sura makes clear, they will suffer the consequences of their actions, and they will suffer it sooner than they think.

If we become arrogant and forget our accountability to our Creator, we are reminded of our insignificance in the cosmic order of things. To recognize Allah's creativity, all we need to do is look at His creation: *"What! Are you the more difficult to create or the heavens above? Allah has constructed it. On high has He raised its canopy and He has given it order and perfection. Its night does He endow it with darkness and its splendor does He bring out*

*with light. And with earth, Has he extended it. He draws out water from it and its pasture, and the mountains has He firmly fixed.” (79:27-32)*

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