

# Tafseer Surah Al-Muzzammil (المزمل)

Notes on Nouman Ali Khan's Concise Commentary of the Quran

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## Introduction

- I. This chapter describes the inside and outside balance of the believer through the character of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)
- II. Surah al-Muzzammil and Surah al-Muddathir are sister *surahs*
- III. This came down after Surah al-Muddathir

## Tafseer of the Verses

### 1. O you wrapped 'in your clothes'!

- a. This is in reference to the Prophet (pbuh) who was wrapped up in his clothes
- b. The wording used here is in reference to someone who is relaxed

### 2. Stand all night 'in prayer' except a little

- a. This is a command for him to pray the *Tahajjud* prayer
  - i. It is supererogatory for us but was obligatory for the Prophet (pbuh)
- b. The general command in this verse is for him to pray most of the night
  - i. However, in the next two verses Allah gives him other options for its length as well

### 3. 'Pray' half the night, or a little less

- a. Meaning pray either half of the night if you wish or a little less than it like one-third  
[*Al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

### 4. Or a little more—and recite the Quran 'properly' in a measured way

- a. Meaning or you can pray a little more than half of the night like two-thirds [*Al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
- b. The second part of the verse means to recite the Qur'an in the following manner:
  - i. In a slow, rhythmic, enunciated fashion
  - ii. Calm down while reciting it
  - iii. Give each syllable its due
  - iv. Make sure every letter is clearly uttered
- c. We need to remember that this is very early Qur'an when very little was revealed yet the Prophet (pbuh) is being told to recite it slowly throughout the night. This means he would be repeating a lot of it
  - i. This should make us reflect today how in Ramadan many people want to just speed through the Qur'an as fast as possible, without slowing down, just because they want to finish it

- ii. When we recite it over and over again slowly with reflection and understanding, it should seep into our souls

**5. 'For' We will soon send upon you a weighty revelation**

- a. This is in reference to the Qur'an. This is because the Prophet (pbuh) has a responsibility to deliver its message to the people and it was not easy for him
  - i. We can learn from this that the closer we are to Allah, the stronger we get to be able to take on this responsibility. Reciting the Qur'an in the middle of the night slowly in *Tahajjud* prayer helps us get closer to Allah
- b. The Qur'an is 'weighty' because of the obligations, limits, rulings, etc. it contains within it [*Al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]. Acting by these rulings is a heavy responsibility
  - i. Some said the Qur'an being 'weighty' means that it will be heavy on the Prophet (pbuh) when it is revealed to him and it is reported that he used to start sweating heavily even on cold days whenever he would receive revelation [Ibn Jawzi]

**6. Indeed, worship in the night is more impactful and suitable for recitation**

- a. This is because there are no distractions due to the fact that most people are asleep and there is nothing else for you to busy yourself with, thus, the person's heart will be more attentive to the recitation
- b. Some said the second part means that it is more suitable at that time because Allah is closest during the last one-third of the night

**7. For during the day you are over-occupied 'with worldly duties'**

- a. The Prophet (pbuh) was busy during the day with his daily chores, calling people to Islam, etc. so he is being told to free himself at night for worship [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]

**8. 'Always' remember the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him wholeheartedly**

- a. Meaning remember Allah often during the day and night, devote yourself to worshipping Him when you are done with your daily affairs, and request aid from Him for all of your needs [Ibn Kathir and Jazairi]
- b. The 'remembrance' can be done with any type of *dhikr* (prayer, *tasbeeh*, *salah*, etc.) and 'devotion' to Him is done by detaching the heart from creation, being characterized by the love of Allah, and [doing] anything that brings the person closer to Him and His pleasure [Sa'di]

**9. 'He is the' Lord of the east and the west. There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Him, so take Him 'alone' as a Trustee of Affairs**

- a. Meaning keep your trust completely in Allah and rely on Him alone for all your affairs
  - i. Because Allah is the owner, master, and controller of everything, He deserves to be worshipped alone, thus, we can rely on Him and put our trust in Him for all of our affairs [*Al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]

**10. Be patient 'O Prophet' with what they say, and depart from them courteously**

- a. If we connect the previous verses with this one, it seems Allah wants to teach the Prophet (pbuh) that as long as he keeps going back to Allah at night for *Tahajjud* prayer, it will rejuvenate him to be able to deal with indecent people
  - i. It will keep him motivated to continue giving *da'wah*

- b. Allah is also telling the Prophet (pbuh) to leave those who may be rude towards him, when he is giving *da'wah* to them, in a decent manner. He should behave with them in the opposite manner
  - i. He is being asked to turn away from them and abandon seeking vengeance for their behavior [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]

**11. And leave to Me the deniers—the people of luxury—and bear with them for a little while**

- a. Allah is saying here to the Prophet (pbuh) to not worry about the deniers of His message and to leave them to Him to deal with and to wait for just a little while until their time finally comes to be dealt with
- b. There are different opinions on who the 'people of luxury' is in reference to:
  - i. Some said it is in reference to those disbelieving leaders of the Quraysh that were later killed in Badr, thus, this verse is a prophecy [Sabuni]
  - ii. Some said it is in reference to those top among the Quraysh who used to ridicule [the message] [Ibn Jawzi]
  - iii. Some said it is in reference to sons of A-Mugheerah who used to take much pleasure in the worldly life [Ibn Juzayy]
  - iv. Some said it is in reference to wealthy people [among the Quraysh who were denying the message] [Sabuni]

**12. 'For' We certainly have shackles, a 'raging' Fire**

- a. This is in reference to the severe punishment awaiting the deniers. Allah has made it an exemplary punishment for the one who continues to sin [Sa'di]
  - i. They will be heavily chained up and burned in the fire [Sabuni]

**13. Choking food, and a painful punishment 'in store for them'**

- a. The food has thorns on it that gets stuck in the throat so it does not go down. The food of the people of Hell is designed that way. Then Allah tells us that there will be additional punishment on top of this choking food
  - i. Others said the food does not go down because it is unpalatable and severely bitter [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar* and *al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]

**14. On the Day the earth and mountains will shake 'violently', and mountains will be 'reduced to' dunes of shifting sand**

- a. Now we are being shown imagery of the Day of Judgement to make us realize some of the horrors that will take place on that dreadful day. If such will be the condition of solid mountains due to the horror of that day, then what will be the condition of people?! [Sabuni]

**15. Indeed, We have sent to you a messenger as a witness over you, just as We sent a messenger to Pharaoh**

- a. Now, Allah is speaking directly to the people of Mecca
- b. Meaning we sent Muhammad (pbuh) as a guide and warner to you. He will bear witness over your actions on the Day of Judgement. Then Allah gives them the example of Prophet Musa (pbuh) who was sent to the Pharaoh [Sabuni]

**16. But Pharaoh disobeyed the messenger, so We seized him with a stern grip**

- a. Meaning if the powerful Pharaoh could not protect himself, then how will you do so?!

- b. Some said it means if you disobey your messenger, then you would be behaving like Pharaoh when he disobeyed Musa (pbuh) and denied his message. So he was seized with a severe grip that he could not bear which resulted in his hideous destruction [Sa'di and Sabuni]

**17. If you 'pagans' persist in disbelief, then how will you guard yourselves against 'the horrors of' a Day which will turn children's hair grey?**

- a. Meaning how would you protect yourself if you disbelieve in Allah and deny His messenger on that long severe day?! [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]
- b. Two interpretations as to why the children's hair will turn gray on the Day of Judgement:
  - i. Due to the length of that day
  - ii. Due to the shock, horror, and worry of that day

**18. It will 'even' cause the sky to split apart. His promise must be fulfilled**

- a. Meaning the horrors of that day are so horrific that even the sky itself will rip apart. That tremendous day is going to inevitably take place because Allah does not break His promise [Sabuni]

**19. Surely this is a reminder. So let whoever wills take the 'Right' Way to their Lord**

- a. Meaning these details regarding what will take place on the Day of Judgement is only a reminder, thus, the believers should take heed and benefit from it [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-Tafseer*]
  - i. So whoever among mankind wants to take heed, then let him/her do so by taking the path to Allah [Sabuni]
    - 1. The path is taken by adopting the Islamic faith and doing righteous deeds [Sabuni]

**20. Surely your Lord knows that you 'O Prophet' stand 'in prayer' for nearly two-thirds of the night, or 'sometimes' half of it, or a third, as do some of those with you. Allah 'alone' keeps a 'precise' measure of the day and night. He knows that you 'believers' are unable to endure this, and has turned to you in mercy. So recite 'in prayer' whatever you can from the Quran. He knows that some of you will be sick, some will be travelling throughout the land seeking Allah's bounty, and some fighting in the cause of Allah. So recite whatever you can from it. And 'continue to' perform 'regular' prayers, pay alms-tax, and lend to Allah a good loan. Whatever good you send forth for yourselves, you will find it with Allah far better and more rewarding. And seek Allah's forgiveness. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful**

- a. The first half of this verse was revealed in Mecca and the second half in Medina according to Ibn Abbas
  - i. The Medina portion starts from, "*He knows that some of you will be sick...*"
- b. Breakdown of the verse
  - i. "*Surely your Lord knows that you 'O Prophet' stand 'in prayer' for nearly two-thirds of the night, or 'sometimes' half of it, or a third, as do some of those with you*"
    - 1. This is in reference to the *Tahajjud* prayer that the Prophet (pbuh) used to pray in obedience to Allah and seeking His pleasure [Sabuni]
      - a. He used to do it for different lengths of time not always the same

- b. Some of his companions, who saw good in it, also used to perform it
- ii. *“Allah ‘alone’ keeps a ‘precise’ measure of the day and night”*
  - 1. Meaning Allah knows the precise length of time which you all stand during the night for *Tahajjud* [Sabuni]
  - 2. Some said it means that Allah keeps count of the hours of the day and night, thus, He knows exactly how many hours have passed and how many are remaining [*al-Tafseer al-Muyassar*]
- iii. *“He knows that you ‘believers’ are unable to endure this, and has turned to you in mercy”*
  - 1. Meaning Allah knows that the believers are unable to stand in prayer the whole night or even most of it, thus, He has turned to them in mercy and lightened it for them [Sabuni]
  - 2. Some have understood from this that the *Tahajjud* prayer used to be obligatory on the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) but here Allah is abrogating the ruling. Thus, it became optional for the believers but remained obligatory for the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) [Sabuni]
- iv. *“So recite ‘in prayer’ whatever you can from the Quran”*
  - 1. Meaning so now when you pray *Tahajjud*, then recite whatever is easy for you from the Qur’an [Sabuni]
    - a. In other words, do not worry about spending one-third, two-third, or one-half of the night standing in *Tahajjud* prayer. Just pray whatever amount is easy for you
      - i. This is why we should try to get up at night and pray even if it is just two units (*rak’ahs*) of short prayer
        - 1. Some benefits of *Tahajjud* prayer include [Sabuni]:
          - a. Contains within it different types of obedient acts (*dhikr*, prayer, reciting Qur’an, seeking forgiveness, supplication, etc.)
          - b. Strengthens the body
          - c. Purifies the soul
          - d. Accustoms one to the roughness of life
          - e. Helps one avoid the lifestyle of the wealthy (relaxed, luxurious, immersed in pleasures, etc.)
            - i. Perhaps because *Tahajjud* prayer makes the person realize the reality of this life and not to let it distract one from preparing for the afterlife [*My personal reflection*]
- v. *“He knows that some of you will be sick, some will be travelling throughout the land seeking Allah’s bounty, and some fighting in the cause of Allah”*

1. Here Allah is giving the wisdom behind why He lightened the *Tahajjud* for the believers. There are three reasons mentioned which make it difficult for those in such circumstances to perform the *Tahajjud* prayer [Sabuni]:
  - a. Some are afflicted with disease/sickness
  - b. Some travel for the purpose of earning their livelihood
  - c. Some are out fighting for the sake of Allah and are busy during the day doing *jihad* against the enemies of Islam
  
- vi. *“So recite whatever you can from it”*
  1. Meaning when you pray *Tahajjud*, then recite whatever is easy for you from the Qur’an [Sabuni]
  
- vii. *“And ‘continue to’ perform ‘regular’ prayers, pay alms-tax, and lend to Allah a good loan”*
  1. Three important things are mentioned in this verse:
    - a. Performing the five daily obligatory prayers
    - b. Paying the *zakkah* from our wealth
    - c. Giving optional charity (*sadaqah*)
      - i. Allah called it a ‘loan’ because He will give us much more in return either in this life or the next. This is why we should never shy away from giving charity to others for the sake of Allah. We should have complete trust in Him that He will return it back to us
  
- viii. *“Whatever good you send forth for yourselves, you will find it with Allah far better and more rewarding”*
  1. Meaning whatever good deeds you perform in obedience to Allah for His pleasure, you will find its reward with Allah multiplied in the afterlife [Sabuni]
  
- ix. *“And seek Allah’s forgiveness. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”*
  1. His Forgiveness gets rid of our sins and His Mercy takes us to paradise
    - a. We must first be forgiven before we can qualify for paradise, thus, a believer is always seeking Allah’s forgiveness
  2. Meaning seek forgiveness from Allah because He is Forgiving and Merciful to whoever turns to Him in repentance [*al-Mukhtasar fee al-tafseer*]
    - a. This is because mankind is rarely free of any shortcomings or negligence [Sabuni]