

Reflections

LAILATUL QADR (The Night of Destiny)

All Praise is due to Allah, the Exalted. Peace and blessings of Allah be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad, his family and all his companions.

We now have a few days of Ramadan left. Let us make the best of it and gain maximum spiritual benefit from the last ten auspicious and blessed days. Who knows if we will see the next Ramadaan or not? Let us all make Istighfaar in abundance, stay away from oppression, injustice, transgression, disobedience and all types of sin. Let us be concerned and fulfil the rights of our fellow human beings. Let us all create love, unity and quality of helping each other within the Ummah. Let us stay away from vain and futile activities, stealing away our time for Zikrullah. Let us all review our covenant with Allah to obey His Commands as prescribed in the Noble Quran. Let us also plead sincerely for forgiveness before our Most Merciful Rabb and abstain from all evil.

From amongst the blessed nights of the month of Ramadan, one is known as “**Lailatul Qadr**” and during it, blessings, rewards, forgiveness and an abundance of good is gained. So valuable is this Night of Qadr that the Qur’an devotes a special chapter (Surah Al-Qadr) to it and by saying in it that “**Lailatul Qadr is better than a thousand months**” (97:3). This one night surpasses the value of the nights of one thousand months i.e. 83 years and 4 months. The most authentic account of the occurrence of this Night indicates that it occurs on any one of the last ten, odd-numbered nights of the Islamic month of Ramadan. The fact that the exact night is unknown reflects Allah’s Will to keep it hidden.

Allah, the Exalted, says:

Verily! We have sent it (this Qur'an) down in the night of *Al-Qadr* (Decree).

And what will make you know what the night of *Al-Qadr* (Decree) is?

The night of *Al-Qadr* (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e. 83 years and 4 months).

Therein descend the angels and the *Rooḥ* [Angel Jibreel (AS)] by Allah's Permission with all Decrees, Peace! (All that night, there is Peace and Goodness from Allah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn. (Surah Al-Qadr: Chapter 97)

Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anhu) relates that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said:

“Whoever fasted the month of Ramadaan out of sincere Faith (*imaan*) and hoping for a reward from Allah (*ih-tisaaban*), then all his past sins will be forgiven; and whoever stood for prayers in the Night of Qadr out of sincere Faith (*imaan*) and hoping for a reward from Allah (*ih-tisaaban*), then all his previous sins will be forgiven.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Allah, Most Exalted, has made worship during this night worth more than a thousand months, i.e. anyone who spent this night in worship, would have worshipped more than an equivalent of eighty three years and four months – **lailatul qadri khayrum-min-alfi shahr** - “**The Night of Qadr is better than a thousand months.**” The reality is that Allah can increase the rewards gained during this month to as much as He wants and the amount is beyond our imagination.

THE MEANING OF LAILATUL QADR IN DETAIL

1. Imam Zuhri (rahmatullahi alayhi) states that ‘**Qadr**’ means status. So in comparison to other nights, this night has a greater status and hence it is known as Lailatul Qadr (the Night of Power).

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2. Abdullah ibn Abbas (radiyallahu anhu) relates that in this night, Allah orders the angels to write down all that has been predestined for a whole year from the Lawh Al-Mahfooz for execution in the coming year. Hence it is known as the Night of Destiny because the destiny of individuals and nations that was decided in pre-eternity is assigned to the relevant angels who are appointed for Cosmic Planning. Everyone's age, death, sustenance, rain and other matters are measured out in detail to the angels to be implemented and executed for a complete year from one Ramadan to the next. According to Abdullah ibn Abbas (radiyallahu anhu), there are FOUR angels in charge of Cosmic Planning i.e. Israfeel (AS), Mikaa'eel (AS), Izra'eel (AS), Jibra'eel (AS). He also said that Allah sent Angel Jibreel (AS) with the entire Qur'an to the scribes of the nethermost heaven (on Lailatul Qadr) i.e. on the night of Judgement and Decree. (see Tanweer al-Miqbaas min Tafseer Ibn Abbas).

3. The following reason has also been given for it being called 'Qadr': "During this night, Allah Almighty sent His Book of Power, the Holy Qur'an to the Community (Ummah) of Power, through the Messenger of Power via which He revealed His cognition and existence. It is for this reason that the word 'Qadr' appears three times in this Surah al-Qadr." (Imam Fakhrud-din Razi, Tafsir al-Kabir, 28/32)

4. According to Tafsir al-Khazin, 'Qadr' can also mean crowded. The reason for this is that the Angels come to the earth with such abundance, excellence and goodness, that the ground becomes crowded with angels. (Imam Ala'ud-din Ali bin Muhammad al-Khazin, Tafsir al-Khazin, 4:395)

5. Abu Bakr al-Warraq (rahimahullah), upon commenting on 'Qadr' says that on this night the worshippers are made into owners of Power, even if they weren't worthy of such a thing before. (as quoted by al-Qurtubi in his Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 20:131)

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR HAVING THIS NIGHT?

The reason for this Ummah gaining this blessed night was the result of the concern our beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) had for us. The following is stated in the Mu'atta of Imam Malik (rahimahullah):

"Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) looked back at the previous communities of Prophets and saw that his community (ummah) lived for a much shorter period in comparison to them. He was concerned about how his community (ummah) would be able to gain as many rewards as those of the previous communities. So when Allah, the Exalted, saw the concerns in the heart of His Beloved Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam), then the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) was given Lailatul Qadr, which is more meritorious than a thousand months."

It is similarly narrated from Abdullah Ibn Abbas (radiyallahu anhu), that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) mentioned before his Companions about a man of the previous communities, who had done jihad in the way of Allah for a thousand months: ***"Then Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) became wary about his community and in this concern, made the following dua: 'O my Lord, as a result of the low life span of my community, their deeds will also be low.' Upon this, Allah gave the Prophet this night of Lailatul Qadr."*** (Alaud-din Ali bin Muhammad al-Khazin, Tafsir al-Khazin, 4:39)

One report of Hadith also states that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) mentioned before his Companions, the virtues of great personalities, such as the Prophets Ayyub, Zakariyya, Hazqil and Yushi (alayhimus-salaam) and stated that they worshiped Allah for so many years and that they never disobeyed Allah. The Companions - who were present there - developed great desire to do the same. Imam Qurtubi writes that at that moment, Angel Jibreel (alayhis-salaam) came and said: ***"O Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam), your community (Ummah) are shocked about the eighty upon eighty years of worship made by these people. Allah has given you much more," and then the chapter "inna anzal-nahu fi laylatil-qadri" was revealed. Upon this, the face***

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of Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) became radiant with happiness."
(Imam al-Qurtubi, Tafsir Qurtubi, 20:130)

So it is through the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) that this Ummah received the Glorious Night of Lailatul Qadr, the worship in which is worth more than a thousand months - in which there is no Lailatul Qadr - and even much more.

Lailatul Qadr is a blessing which has ONLY been given to the Ummah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam).

Imam Jalaluddin Suyuti (rahmatullahi alayhi) relates on the authority of Anas (radiyallahu anhu) who reports that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said: ***"This blessed night has only been gifted to my Ummah. None of the previous communities (umam) ever received such a gift."*** (Jalaluddin Abdur-Rahman Suyuti, Tafsir ad-Durr al-Manthur, 6:371)

The Mufasssiroon (scholars of tafsir - who were learned in the science of commentating on the Qur'anic verses) write that in the previous communities, a person was known as an 'aabid' after worshiping Allah for a thousand months. However, the Holy Prophet's (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) community has received such a gift, that we are able to gain similar rewards in just one single night. (Muhammad bin Ali Shawkaani, Fathul-Qadir, 5:472)

THE TIME FOR SEEKING REPENTANCE

This is also a great gift which has been given to those who love and follow the teachings of the leader of the two worlds (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam).

Sayyiduna Anas (radiyallahu anhu) relates, that Allah's Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said at the beginning of one Ramadan:

"This month which we have entered, contains one night which is more beneficial than a thousand months. Any person who abstained from the worship of this night has rejected the good that is received during it; and any person who rejected the good received during it is undoubtedly a rejected person." (Sunan Ibn Maajah)

What can be said about a person, who during this night avoids grasping the gifts available and chooses the path of sinning? We are prepared to stay awake for meaningless talks and socializing activities, but fail to stay awake during one night in worship, which contains more rewards than the worship made for more than a thousand months.

Sayyiduna Anas (radiyallahu anhu) reports that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) stated the following about the virtues of Lailatul Qadr: ***"During Lailatul Qadr, Angel Jibreel (alayhis-salaam) descends on the earth with a large number of Angels who invokes Allah for the forgiveness of those who spend their time remembering and worshiping Allah in any lawful way"***. This has been mentioned in Surat al-Qadr, in the following words: ***"Therein descend the Angels and the Rooh (i.e. Angel Jibreel) by Allah's permission with all decrees."*** (Surah Al-Qadr: Verse 4)

WHY HAS THE TIME OF LAILATUL QADR KEPT HIDDEN?

The following reasons have been given by the Qur'an Commentators (mufasssiroon) for the time of Lailatul Qadr to be kept unknown:

1. Many special things have been kept hidden, for example, the Great Name of Allah (Al-Ism Al-A'zam), the time when every invocation is accepted during Jumu'ah, etc. Similarly the timing of Lailatul Qadr has also been kept a secret.

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2. If the exact time of the night had been stated, people would neglect other nights and would only worship during this one night.
3. If the exact time of the night had been stated and someone were to miss it, they may not live long enough to gain such a blessed night.
4. Allah the Exalted loves His servants to stay awake in worship during the night. So He kept the exact time of the night hidden so that in search of this night, His slaves would spend more nights in worshipping Him.
5. If the exact timing was given and a sinner committed a major offence during it, the disrespect would be considered and written down in his deeds as a MAJOR transgression.

THE TIMING OF LAILATUL QADR ACCORDING TO THE ULAMA

Although the timing of this night has been kept a secret, a great majority of scholars hold the opinion that one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of the month of Ramadan is Lailatul-Qadr. And amongst these also, most scholars think that it is the 27th night. Below are some authentic Ahaadith which have been reported in this connection:

1. It is one of the nights of the last ten days of Ramadan:

Ummul Mu'minoon Aisha as-Siddiqah (radiyallahu anha) reports that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said: **“Seek out Lailatul Qadr in the last ten days of Ramadan.”** (Bukhari)

So sitting in I'tikaaf (staying in the masjid and worshipping Allah in isolation – which is Sunnat alal kifaayah - is also searching for Lailatul Qadr, which is why it has been made Sunnah to do so in the last ten days of Ramadan.

2. The twenty seventh night of Ramadan is most likely to be Lailatul Qadr. Imam al-Qurtubi (rahimahullah) writes about the opinion of the majority of the Ulama with regard to this: **“There exists ikhtilaaf (a difference of opinion) amongst the Ulama about the exact time of Lailatul Qadr, but the overwhelming majority believe that it is twenty seventh night.”** (see Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 20:134)

Allama Aaloosi (rahimahullah) writes:

“The preference of the Ulama is that it falls on the twenty seventh night.” (see Tafsir Rooh al-Ma'ani, 3:220)

Abdullah bin Abbas and Ubayy bin Ka'b (radiyallahu anhumah) also held this view:

Dhu ibn Jaysh (radiyallahu anhu) said that he told Ubayy bin Ka'b (radiyallahu anhu) that Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (radiyallahu anhu) stated that if a person was to worship all throughout the year, he would find Lailatul Qadr. Ubayy bin Ka'b (radiyallahu anhu) heard and replied that he knew of Abdullah bin Mas'ud (radiyallahu anhu) having knowledge of it being in the last ten nights of Ramadan and the twenty seventh night in particular. The reason why he said this (what was related by Dhu ibn Jaysh) was so that people would not just take to worshipping during this one night, but would instead worship in every night of the year. **He then stood and said, “that night is on the twenty seventh,” upon which, I asked, “how do you know this?” He replied: “Allah’s Messenger (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) gave us some signs and these are only found on this night.”**

3. It is reported from Ubayy ibn Ka'b (radiyallahu anhu) that he heard the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) saying: **“Lailatul Qadr is the 27th night of Ramadaan”.** (quoted by Imam al-Qurtubi in his Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 10:136)

4. Similar other reports of Hadith have been narrated that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said: **“Lailatul Qadr is the 27th night of Ramadaan”.** (Musnad of Imam Ahmad – Sunan of Abu Dawood).

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5. According to Abu Hurairah (radiyallahu anhu), the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said, in connection with Lailatul Qadr, **that it is the 27th night.** (Abu Dawood).

6. When Zirr bin Hubaish asked Ubayy bin Ka'b (radiyallahu anhum) about Lailatul Qadr, **he stated on oath, and did not make any exception, that it is the 27th night.** (Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i, Ibn Hibban -- also see Tafsir ibn Kathir).

Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Abbas (radiyallahu anhu) provides three internal Qur'anic evidences for the occurrence of Lailatul Qadr falling on the twenty seventh night of Ramadan:

1. The word **Lailatul Qadr** (in Arabic) contains **nine letters** and **appears three times** in Surah al-Qadr. The product of this (**3 X 9**) gives **twenty seven**. Imam Fakhrud-din Razi (rahimahullah) has quoted this evidence of his in the following words: "The word Lailatul Qadr contains nine letters and is mentioned three times in this surah, giving the product twenty seven." (see Tafsir al-Kabir of Imam Fakhrud-din Razi, 32:30)
2. Surah al-Qadr contains **thirty words** in total and **the word** which gives us information about this night is "**hiya**", and this is the **twenty seventh word** of this surah: "The Surah contains thirty words in total and 'hiya' is the twenty seventh word of the Surat." (see Tafsir al-Kabir of Imam Fakhrud-din Al-Razi, 32:30)
3. Sayyiduna Umar (radiyallahu anhu) asked Abdullah ibn Abbas (radiyallahu anhu) about the timing of Lailatul Qadr. He was given the following reply: "Allah the Almighty likes **odd numbers and of these, the number seven in particular**. We can see this in His creation; for example He created seven skies, seven worlds, seven days in a week, seven circuits around the Ka'ba to make one tawaf and so on." (see Tafsir al-Kabir of Imam Fakhrud-din Al-Razi, 32:30)

Abu Bakr al-Warraq (rahimahullah) has stated this in the following words:

"Just as the month of Ramadan contains thirty days, **this Surah contains thirty words**. So every word of this surah represents a night of Ramadan. The word '**hiya**' is the **twenty seventh word** of this Surah and it implies Lailatul Qadr falling on the **twenty seventh night**." (quoted by Imam al-Qurtubi in his Tafsir al-Qurtubi, 10:136)

On the basis of some of the reports related above, and on the authority of great Companions like Mu'awiyah, Ibn Umar, Ibn Abbas and others (radiyallahu anhum), a large number of the earliest scholars regarded the 27th of Ramadan as Lailatul-Qadr. Probably (and Allah knows best) that Allah and His Messenger have not specified any one night for the reason so that the people, in their zeal to benefit from the virtues of Lailatul Qadr, should spend more and more nights in worship and devotion and should not remain content with only one night. Here the question also arises that when it is night at Makkah, it is daytime in other large parts of the world; therefore, the people of those parts can never take advantage of Lailatul-Qadr. The answer is that the word night in Arabic is mostly used for the combination of the day and night. Therefore, the night preceding the day on any one of these dates of Ramadan can also be Lailatul-Qadr for that part of the world.

However, having noted some of the facts of the Prophet's companion and scholars on Lailatul Qadr above, we have to be very careful and considerate. Since many more authentic Ahaadith show that the practice of our beloved Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) was that he was more vigilant in the last TEN odd numbered nights of Ramadaan in search for Lailatul Qadr, let us also try our best to practice on this insisted Sunnah in searching for Lailatul Qadr during the last ten odd-numbered nights of Ramadan in Tilaawat of the Qu'ran, Zikrullah, Istighfaar and Dua!

SUPPLICATION (DUA) DURING THE NIGHT OF QADR

It is related from our Mother of the Believers Aisha as-Siddiqah (radiyallahu anha) that she asked the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) what she should pray during Lailatul Qadr. He replied:

"Allahumma innaka afuwwun tuhibbul afwa fa'fu anni"

which means: **"O Allah! You are the One Who forgives and loves to forgive, so forgive me."**

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SOME BENEFICIAL DEEDS TO DO ON LAILATUL QADR

We should strive to stay up at least on the odd numbered nights of the last ten days. If we can't manage that then let us pray at least on the 27th night. If one prays on all of the last odd numbered nights then there is more chance that one may have caught this most powerful night, the reward of which is more than praying for 83 YEARS OF WORSHIP! Subhaanallah! Most of us will not even live up to that age!

It is a night that we CANNOT miss out on. So here below is how we can maximise the benefit of this blessed night:

1. RECITE THE QUR'AN ABUNDANTLY:

Upon the coming of Ramadaan, Imam Az-Zuhri used to say, ***"It is only about reciting the Qur'an and feeding the poor."*** Laylatul Qadr is the night on which the Qur'an was revealed. So we should spend much of the night reciting it for we will gain 700 hasanaat or more by reciting each letter of the Kalaamullah (Speech of Allah).

2. STRIVE TO GAIN ALLAH'S FORGIVENESS:

One should strive and do their utmost to gain the Mercy and Forgiveness of Allah especially in the odd numbered nights of the last ten days. If one leaves Ramadaan without gaining the Mercy and Forgiveness of Allah, then surely they are the most unfortunate ones and are the biggest losers in this world and the hereafter.

We should sincerely repent for past and present sins with the intention of not repeating them again and ask of Allah Ta'aala to help us prevent ourselves from doing them again. Also ask Allah to perfect our characters and to help us improve ourselves in every way possible.

3. DO MUCH SUPEROGATORY PRAYERS (NAFIL SALAAH)

Rabi'ah ibn Malik al-Aslami reported that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said: "Ask (anything)." Rabi'ah said: "I ask of you to be your companion in Paradise." The Prophet said: "Or anything else?" Rabi'ah said: "That is it." The Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said to him: ***"Then help me by making many prostrations (i.e. Nafil Prayers)."*** (Muslim)

The Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said: ***"Whoever draws near to Allah during it (Ramadaan) with a single characteristic from the characteristics of (voluntary) goodness, he is like whoever performs an obligatory act in other times. And whoever performs an obligatory act during it, he is like whoever performed seventy obligatory acts in other times."*** (Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah, no. 1887).

In this most blessed month of Ramadan all good deeds are multiplied by 70 or more. Every Nafil Salaah one prays, one will gain the reward of a Fard Salaah and every Fard Salaah is the reward of 70 Fard Salaah. Subhanallah! Which other times of the year is this possible? So let us make the best of these precious seconds and pray as many Nafil Salaah as is practically possible.

4. INCREASE IN DHIKR (REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH)

We should glorify Allah every night and day, especially in the last odd nights of Ramadaan. Here are some easy and very beneficial Dhikr and Glorification we can do throughout the last ten nights of Ramadan:

1. Allahumma innaka 'afuwun tuhibbul 'afwa fa'fu 'annee.
2. Subhanallah
3. Alhamdulillah
4. Allahu Akbar
5. Laa ilaha ilallah
6. Hasbiyallahu La ilaaha illa huw. Alayhi tawakkaltu wahuwa Rabbul Arshil Azeem.
7. Asthaghfirullah
8. Subhaanallahi wa bihamdihi Subhaanallahil Azeem
9. Subhaanallahi, wa-l-hamdu li-llahi, wa la ilaaha illa-llahu, wa-llahu akbar. Wa la hawla wa la quwwata illa bi-llahi-l-aliyyi-l-azim

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10. La ilaaha illa-llahu waḥdahu la shareeka lahu lahu-l-mulku wa la hul-hamdu yuhyi wa yumeetu wahuwa hayyul la yamootu abadan abada, dhul-jalaali wa-l-ikraam, biyadihil-khayr, wa huwa ala kulli shai'in qadeer.

or the shortened version:

11. Laa ilaaha illal-laahu wahdahu laa shareeka lahu, la hul-mulku wa la hul-hamdu wa huwa 'alaa kulli shay-in qadeer

One should also recite Durood Shareef abundantly on our beloved Prophet like the one read the daily Salaah; or repeat as often as you can by reading, **Sallallahu Alan Nabiyyil Ummyyi** – Blessings of Allah be upon the Nabi Al-Ummi.

5. MAKE LOTS OF DU'A (SUPPLICATION)

We should be very busy in Du'a at all times as much as we can, and especially in the last 10 nights of Ramadaan. Allah Almighty says in the Qur'an:

And when My servants ask you (O Prophet SAW) concerning Me, then (answer them), I am indeed near (to them by My Knowledge). I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me. So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright. (2:186)

Du'a is so honourable to Allah that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) had said: **"Nothing is more honourable to Allah the Most High than Du'a."** (Sahih al-Jami' no. 5268).

Almighty Allah also said: **"The most excellent worship is Du'a."** (Sahih Al-Jami' no. 1133)

Abdullah Ibn Umar (radiallahu anhuma) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) said: **"Du'a is beneficial in everything. It is efficacious in warding off misfortunes which have already descended as well as misfortunes which are about to descend. Therefore, the servants of Allah should be steadfast in making Du'a."** (Ahmad, Tirmidhi)

Therefore let us devote much of the Lailatul Qadr (The Night of Destiny) in Du'a - asking of Allah for his Mercy and Forgiveness for all of our past sins; and making firm intentions to Allah that we will change for the better and strive to become closer to Him. That we will make our Deen (Al-Islam) a COMPLETE part of our lives and not just a little part-time hobby; as Allah commands us in the following words:

O you who believe! Enter into Islam completely (by obeying all the rules and regulations of the Islamic religion) and follow not the footsteps of Shaitan (Satan). Verily! He is to you an open enemy. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayah 208-210)

And Allah is the One Who gives tawfeeq and guides.

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