

Laylatul Qadr

By Adam Walker, UK

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ
وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ
لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ
تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ
سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

[97:1] *In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.* [97:2] *Surely, We sent it down during the Night of Decree.* [97:3] *And what shall make thee know what the Night of Decree is?* [97:4] *The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months.* [97:5] *Therein descend angels and the Spirit by the command of their Lord with Divine decree concerning every matter.* [97:6] *It is all peace till the rising of the dawn.*

Laylatul Qadar is a night of great blessing in which Allah (swt) showers His Mercy upon those of His believers whom sincerely and faithfully love and obey His Will. It is a night which is commonly associated with the revelation of the Holy Qur'an but also has other meanings which are all deeply rooted in Allah's attribute of Rahmaniyyat.

From the above verses of the Holy Qur'an (97:1-6) we are made to understand that Laylatul Qadr literally means the 'Night of Decree/Power'. It is a night which is of greater value than a thousand months (1000 being the highest numerical figure in Arabic) and in which the angels descend upon the Earth and help to breath a new life into mankind. We also know from another place in the Holy Qur'an (44:4) that it is a 'Blessed Night' (لَيْلَةٌ مُّبَارَكَةٌ),

Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II (rh) writes in his Tafsir al-Kabir that the words 'Therein descend angels and the Spirit' ((تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا)) signify that,

“...the Angels of God descend to meet and satisfy every religious need and to remove all obstacles and impediments from the way of the expansion and spread of the new Message.”
(Tafsir al-Kabir, Pg.2859, Ft.4786)

In the context of Surah al-Qadr we find that Allah (swt) is referring to the most blessed of nights in which the Holy Qur’an was revealed to Hadhrat Khatamul Anbiyaa ﷺ and he recited those blessed verses that will forever live in the hearts of all believers:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ
اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

[96:2] Proclaim thou in the name of thy Lord Who created, [96:3] Created man from a clot of blood. [96:4] Proclaim! and thy Lord is the Most Bounteous; [96:5] Who taught by the pen, [96:6] Taught man what he knew not.

In this context Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih II (rh) has explained that the words ‘one thousand months’ ((ألف شهر)) have several meanings two of which are that:

1. as Laylatul Qadr is better than a countless number of nights this signifies that the period of the Holy Prophet (saw) is greater than all other periods combined;
2. the rich content and value of the Holy Qur’an is greater in worth than the combined research and efforts of all learned men. This definition is derived from the word Months ((شهر)) which can also mean learned men.

Laylatul Qadr also has a wider understanding and can signify that when mankind reaches a point of darkness and is in need of reform Allah (swt) answers their need by sending a new reformer. In relation to this a period of 1000 months roughly amounts to a century and can thus be linked to the saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

‘Verily God will continue for ever to raise for this Ummat in the beginning of every century one who Will restore for it its faith.’ (Abu Dawud, Kitabul Fitan)

Allah (swt) is described in the Holy Qur'an as the Ever Merciful (الرحيم) and such a verse personifies the magnificence of Allah's infinite Mercy which is safeguarded for the remainder of mankind's existence. Further expanding on this the Promised Messiah (as) writes,

﴿(إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ)﴾, *This Night, according to its common interpretation, is a Blessed Night, but some of the verses of the Holy Qur'an indicate that the condition of the darkness of the world is also a Night of Decree on account of its hidden qualities. In that condition of darkness, sincerity and steadfastness, and piety and worship, have great value in the estimation of God. It was because of that condition of darkness which at the time of the advent of the Holy Prophet [peace and blessings of Allah be on him] had arrived at its climax and demanded the descent of a Grand Light, that observing this dark condition and having mercy on the creatures afflicted with darkness, there was an up-surge in the attribute of Rahmaniyyat and heavenly blessings addressed themselves to the earth. That dark condition became blessed for the world and the world thereby received a grand mercy so that the Perfect Man and the Chief of the Prophets, like whom there had been no one, nor ever will be, came for the guidance of the world and brought that bright Book for the world whose match no eye has beheld. It was a great manifestation of spiritual perfection of God that, at a time of gloom and darkness, He sent down a Grand Light which is named the Furqan and which distinguishes between truth and falsehood and which demonstrated the coming of truth and the disappearance of falsehood. It descended upon the earth when the earth had become spiritually dead and land and sea had been greatly corrupted. By its descent it accomplished that to which God Almighty has pointed in the verse:*

﴿(اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا)﴾

That is to say: The earth had died and God revived it afresh. It should be remembered that the descent of the Holy Qur'an which took place for the purpose of reviving the earth came about through the upsurge of the attribute of Rahmaniyyat. This is the attribute which sometimes manifests itself in a material way and causes the rain of mercy to descend upon dry land and thus makes provision for those who are afflicted with famine. The same attribute sometimes surges up spiritually and has mercy on the condition of those who are hungry and thirsty and near unto death on account of misguidance and error, and lack the nourishment of truth and righteousness which is the source of spiritual life. Thus the Gracious One, as He bestows nourishment upon the body at the time of need, so of His Perfect Mercy He provides spiritual nourishment also at the time of need."

(Brahin-e-Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 1, pp. 414-435, footnote 11)

The ultimate effect of a reformer being sent to the Earth is that the world enters a period of peace as is alluded to in the concluding verse of Surah al-Qadr. Khalifatul Masih II (rh) explains:

“The word ((سَلَامٌ)) (peace) stands for a complete sentence meaning, “it is all peace.” In the time of a Prophet or Divine reformer a peculiar kind of mental peace of equanimity descends upon the believers amidst hardships and privations. The heavenly happiness which inspires believers at that time transcends all material and sensuous joys.

The expression ((هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ)) (It is all peace till the rising of the dawn.) means, the passing of the night of hardships and the rising of the dawn of predominance and ascendancy of the cause of truth.” (Tafsir Al-Kabir, Pg.2860 Ft.4797)

Laylatul Qadr also has a significant meaning to each and every believer as it is a night in which a believer can benefit from great blessings. In a reported hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever establishes the prayers on the night of Qadr out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's rewards (not to show off) then all his past sins will be forgiven.”
(al-Bukhari, Vol.1, Bk.2, No. 34)

In another hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ advises as to when one should seek Laylatul Qadr saying:

“Search for the Night of Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan”
(Al-Bukhari, Vol.3, Bk.32, No. 234)

The Promised Messiah (as) is known to have said that should the 27th night of Ramadan fall upon a Friday then through Allah's (swt) Grace this will often be Laylatul Qadr.

In light of the above blessed narrations it is incumbent on each believer to increase his or her worship (Ibaada) during the last ten days of Ramadan and pray sincerely that they may benefit from the fruits of Laylatul Qadr and have all their previous sins forgiven, Insha-Allah. Hadhrat Khalifatul Masih V (aba) delivered a Khutbah on the subject of Laylatul Qadr (14 Nov, 2003) where he emphasised the need for each believer to pay special attention to not only the last ten nights of Ramadan but indeed to every night. Huzur (aba) indicated that one reason behind the ambiguity of which night Laylatul Qadr falls upon is to ensure that believers spend all of the last ten nights in Ibaada and do not simply ritualise one appointed night.

In further explanation of this subject Huzur (aba) added that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said whoever offers all their prayers during the month of Ramadan in congregation gleans a large portion of Laylatul Qadr. Therein is the significance that in order to experience this night one must maintain the highest standard of righteousness through out the month, paying the dues of Allah (swt) and the dues of mankind. Huzur (aba) explained that although certain ahadith signify the appearance of signs (like flashes of light) to verify that one has experienced Laylatul Qadr, these signs are not obligatory to Laylatul Qadr. Indeed the Holy Prophet ﷺ would gather immense resolve and determination at the start of the last ten days of Ramadan, spending these days in worship of God of the highest and most excellent eminence. He enjoined us to profusely engage in remembrance of Allah during these days, to glorify Him and to exalt His greatness.

To support us in this effort the following prayer (dua) to be recited on Laylatul Qadr was conveyed to Hadhrat Aisha (rh) by Hadhrat Khatamul Anbiyaa ﷺ:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوفٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

Allahumma innaka 'afuwwun tu hibul 'afwa fa 'fu 'anni

O Allah! You are the Great Pardoner, You love to pardon. Hence I seek Your pardon
(Ibn Maja, Kitabul Duaa)

May we each engage in sincere worship during this blessed month and incur the Mercy of Allah (swt), Insha-Allah. Ameen