

Laylut Al-Qadr - Introduction

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1. Introduction - What is Laylut Al-Qadr/Night of Power?

Laylut Al-Qadr (night of power) is the most important night in the Islamic calendar. Based on the Quranic verse, "Lo! We revealed it on the Night of Power." (97:1) scholars are of the opinion that it was on this night that the Holy Quran was revealed from *Lowhul Mahooz* (sacred tablets) to the House of Glory (Bayt Al-Izzah) in the lowest heaven, from where it was revealed piecemeal to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings upon him (PBUH)) according to events that took place during his life over a period of twenty-three years. Some scholars are also of the opinion that it was on this night that the previous scriptures were revealed to Prophets Esa (Jesus), Moosa, Dawood and Ebrahim (peace and blessings upon them all), although there is no definitive proof of this.

Laylut Al-Qadr is referred in the Quran as the "night of power".

There is great reward in spending this night in prayer. In explaining the magnificence and virtue of this night, the Almighty states (sura 97): "And what will explain to thee what the Night of Power is? The night of Power is better than a thousand Months. Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand: Peace!.....This until the rise of Morn!"

Can you conceptualise the value of such a night? One night that is better than a thousand months (that is, 30,000 nights)! In his book *Fiqh-us-Sunnah*, the late Egyptian scholar Sheikh Sanyed Sabiq states: "The night of Qadr is the most virtuous night in the whole year. Any action that is done in this night, such as reciting the Qur'an, making mention of Allah, etc. is better than acting for one thousand months which do not contain the night of Qadr."

The Almighty states that on this night, the Angels descend. Scholars are of the opinion that they descend to say "Ameen" to the duas/supplications of those in an act of worship. There is also a view that the Angels also make dua for those found in an act of worship.

Angel Gabriel (A.S.) on this Night also descends to greet those in an act of worship. Scholars link the descending of Gabriel (A.S.) to the descending of the Spirit referred to in the Holy Quran. One of the companions asked the Prophet (PBUH), "How do we know that Gabriel (A.S.) has greeted us?" The Prophet (PBUH) replied that "one would go into a state of ecstasy,

trembling, your heart will soften and you will cry profusely. Then you know Gabriel (A.S.) has greeted you." (Source: Targheeb).

2. When is the night of Laylat al-Qadr?

The exact date is unknown. The knowledge of the date was with the Prophet (PBUH) but the knowledge was taken away from him when he came to announce the date but instead witnessed two Muslims arguing.

Narrated Ubada bin As-Samit: The Prophet (PBUH) came out to inform us about the Night of Qadr but two Muslims were quarrelling with each other. So, the Prophet (PBUH) said, "I came out to inform you about the Night of Qadr but such-and-such persons were quarrelling, so the news of it had been taken away; yet that might be for your own good....." (Bukhari, volume 3, Hadith number 240). The loss of knowledge was due to the Almighty withdrawing the knowledge. It is reported that the Prophet (PBUH) regained the knowledge but was not permitted to reveal the date.

Scholars interpret the statement "yet that might be for your own good..." as a protection for the Ummah. The Night of Qadr should be spent in worship. Not doing so is tantamount to a weakness of faith. Also, some would only pray on the Night of Qadr – we are instead encouraged to devote the last ten nights in prayer.

The guidance provided by the Prophet (PBUH) is that we should seek the Night of Qadr in the last ten days of Ramadan. Narrated Aisha: Allah's Apostle (PBUH) used to practise I'tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan and used to say, "Look for the Night of Qadr in the last ten nights of the month of Ramadhaan." (Bukhari, volume 3, Hadith number 237).

Narrated Aisha: The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Look for the night of Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan." (Bukhari, volume 3, Hadith number 234). In an environment where there is no consensus, on the sighting of the moon, it is advisable to seek the night of power in all the last ten nights as an odd night for one person may not be the same for another.