

## *Lailat-ul-Qadr*

**Friday Khutba by Dr Zahid Aziz, for Lahore Ahmadiyya UK, 7 May 2021**

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٣﴾ حَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٤﴾  
تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَكِ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٥﴾ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٦﴾

“<sup>1</sup>Surely We revealed it on the Night of Majesty — <sup>2</sup>And what will make you comprehend what the Night of Majesty is? <sup>3</sup>The Night of Majesty is better than a thousand months. <sup>4</sup>The angels and the Spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord — for every affair — <sup>5</sup>Peace! it is till the rising of the morning.”  
— ch. 97

This is chapter 97 of the Holy Quran about the Night of Majesty or Power, *Lailat-ul-Qadr*. This was the night, falling in the last ten days of Ramadan, when the Quran was revealed. In the last *Khutba*, I mentioned that the Holy Prophet himself, before his appointment as Messenger of God, undertook rigorous devotions in the cave of Hira every year for a number of years in the month of Ramadan. These devotions included fasting for long periods of time and even his forgetting to eat when not fasting. It was after such intense and extended spiritual exertions by him by means of prayer, pondering and fasting that, at the age of forty years, when he was in that cave of Hira, the Quran *began* to be revealed to him.

The Quran was revealed to *his heart* by the descent of angels and the Spirit (i.e. the angel Gabriel). As the Quran says: “And surely this is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds. The faithful Spirit has brought it, on your heart that you may be a warner, in plain Arabic language.” — 26:192–195

As the revelation of the Quran commenced in the month of Ramadan, hence Islam instituted fasting in this month as a commemoration and anniversary of the revelation of the Quran. So there is a connection between fasting and the revelation of the Word of God to the human heart. In case of the Holy Prophet the Quran actually began to be

revealed to the world through him. In case of other Muslims, we may say that in the month of fasting their knowledge and understanding of the Quran receives further development and progress.

The start of something new, the beginning of a new phase of life, is often marked and commemorated *later on* as special event even though on the day of its occurrence no one knew of its future importance or what it would lead to. *Lailat-ul-Qadr* marks the appearance of the Quran, its birth, in the world, although the achievements of the Quran came after its first revelation. Christians commemorate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. In Islam the birth of the Quran is commemorated in the month immediately preceding *Id-ul-Fitr*. Often a day is celebrated because some efforts made *before that day* come to fruition on that day. The time before that day is when you did the work.

The coming of the angels on the night of every *Lailat-ul-Qadr* is a spiritual experience. People perceive and behold it according to how much they have **striven beforehand to purify themselves and open their hearts** to receive the angels. If you don't strive for it, you don't see it on its arrival. It does not happen that praying during just this night brings reward equal to, or more than, prayers of a thousand months. A thousand months is 83 years literally, or close to the life span of man. If we exert ourselves throughout Ramadan, then by the time *Lailat-ul-Qadr* comes we may have developed enough strength to bring about some permanent change for the good within ourselves. We may have developed some realization of God in our souls which brings us permanently near to Him than before. Then that night of realization will be better for us than a whole life of 83 years in which there is no such realization in our hearts and no change brought about within us. If a person changes his or her life for the better *from some point onwards*, it is as if he had changed the *whole* of his life, even the life which went before it.

So to make *Lailat-ul-Qadr* better than a thousand months lies in our own hands. God provides the ladder but we have to climb it to reach the top. All periods of time, like a day or a night, are equal in the forgiveness we can get from God and favours we can receive from Him. What makes them less or more in their value is how earnestly

we turn to God at that time and what is our own condition. Towards the end of Ramadan we should have developed a condition which makes us turn our hearts fervently and passionately towards God.

*Lailat-ul-Qadr* is better than a thousand months, but still it needs to come every year! How many *Lailat-ul-Qadr*'s have passed in our lives already? Added up together, they would be better than a few thousand years! It comes every year because each time it can give us a step up from what we achieved before. There is no limit or end to the process of getting rid of our faults and of becoming better and better.

Saints and holy people see illumination on this night with their spiritual eyes. Lesser people find their hearts attracted to prayer and to concentration in devotion. The angels act on the heart and bring about peace in it. In the biography of Maulana Muhammad Ali, Mr Nasir Ahmad Faruqi relates that once he asked the Maulana if he had ever experienced *Lailat-ul-Qadr*. The Maulana said:

“Yes. Once in Dalhousie I was saying *tahajjud* prayers during the last ten days of Ramadan. When I was reciting *At-tahiyyat*, suddenly a very bright light appeared in the window. At first I thought that on the road below some people were passing carrying gas lamps, but then I realized that no one would be out in these backwoods at 3 a.m. Then I looked through the window to see what the light was, and saw that it was illuminating even the trees on the mountain far ahead. That scene disappeared as I watched it. Then it occurred to me that it was the illuminations of *Lailat-ul-Qadr* that Allah had shown me.”

(Note: Dalhousie is a mountainous town in India where people from the Punjab, including Maulana Muhammad Ali, along with some other members of the *Jama'at*, used to spend the summer months.)

Mr Faruqi further relates:

“Once in Karachi in 1950, again during the last ten days of Ramadan, it was the night of the 29th. During *tahajjud* prayer I found myself deeply engrossed and felt as if my soul was melting away at Allah's threshold. I was in the state that I did

not want to rise up from *sajdah*. During the pre-dawn meal, where the Hazrat Maulana was also present, I said to him that I thought this night had been the *Lailat-ul-Qadr*. He replied:

“I think so as well. Last night when I was saying the *Isha* prayer, after reciting the *Fatiha* the verse *inna anzalna-hu fi lailat-il-qadr* came again and again to the tip of my tongue but I recited some other verses. During *tahajjud* just now, when I was reciting the *darood*, suddenly a light spread in front of my eyes. I looked up and saw that the sky and the clouds were illuminated by this light. After a short while this scene disappeared.” (*A Mighty Striving*, pages 520–521)

Remember, however, that this is a man who was regular in saying *Tahajjud* prayers all his life. Once a guest in house saw him saying *tahajjud* prayers in another room and stood and watched him through the door. The Maulana took so long even just in his *rakū‘* and *sajdah* that the guest got tired and had to sit down! It is also recorded in his biography: “Whenever anyone in his house woke at night, they would hear a melodious, wonderful sound of the Maulana’s heart-felt crying and supplicating, which included glorification, praise and sanctification of the Almighty. It is God alone Who knows if at that time he was in this world or in another world, but his voice was like that of one who is cut off from this world and all its trappings, and was elsewhere, having lost himself in the Divine Being, and expressing before Him the pain and concern in his heart.”

Apart from being a night in the last days of Ramadan, *Lailat-ul-Qadr* can also be considered as **the whole period of the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad**. It was a time of the deepest darkness, in which the Quran was revealed, borne by angels. The angels also descended on the hearts of the Muslims in that period, purifying them and strengthening their faith. The true believers are spoken of as follows in the Quran:

“These are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and strengthened them *with a Spirit from Himself...*” — 58:22

At the end of this period of the Holy Prophet's work, there was a dawn in the world and spiritual peace in the hearts. The great spiritual and moral progress that Muslims made during this period — people giving up evil habits, bad practices and customs, in an instant in some cases — they could not have achieved **any aspect of it** even in a thousand months outside the blessed period of the Holy Prophet.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad writes: “God the Most High says in *Surah al-Qadr*, in fact He gives the glad tidings to the believers, that His Word and His Prophet were sent down from heaven in the *Lailat-ul-Qadr*. And every reformer and *Mujaddid* who comes from God descends during the *Lailat-ul-Qadr*. Do you know what *Lailat-ul-Qadr* is? It is the name of that dark age whose blackness is total and complete. That period, by its very nature, demands the descent of a heavenly light to dispel the darkness. It has been figuratively called *Lailat-ul-Qadr*, but it is not in fact a night. It is an age which resembles the night because of its darkness. ... in this *Lailat-ul-Qadr* descend the angels of God the Most High and the Holy Spirit from heaven, accompanying that reformer, by the permission of the Lord, not without purpose but in order to reach the responsive hearts and to open up the ways of peace. So they remain engaged in opening all the pathways and lifting all the veils until the darkness of indifference disappears and the dawn of guidance breaks.” (*Fath-i Islam*)

There is in the world today a time of deep darkness for Islam. To the ordinary eye the future prospects for Islam do not seem bright as there are two major evils prevailing and dominating: the outside forces who have a wrong picture of Islam before them and the internal forces who also have a similar wrong concept of Islam. It is also a period of darkness for our Movement, facing so many dangers, so much opposition and such serious threats of all kinds to its existence. On the other hand, this night is also magnificent because light and guidance has been brought to us by angels in the form of the picture of Islam presented by this Movement. Our task is to spread that light to make the darkness disappear.