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It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever spends the night of Laylat al-Qadr in prayer out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1901; Muslim, 759.

This hadeeth points to the virtue of Laylat al-Qadr and spending this night in prayer. It is a great night which Allaah has honored and made better than a thousand months in its blessing and the blessing of righteous deeds done on this night. It is better than worshipping for a thousand months, or eighty-three years and four months. Hence whoever spends this night in prayer out of faith and in the hope of reward, his sins will be forgiven.

Concerning the virtue of this night, verses of Qur’aan which are frequently recited were revealed. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“We sent it (this Qur’aan) down on a blessed night [(i.e. the Night of Al-Qadr,) in the month of Ramadaan]. Verily, We are ever warning [mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of Lordship and in Our Oneness of worship].

4. Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments”

[al-Dukhaan 44:3-4]

It is a blessed night, i.e., in it there is much goodness and barakah, because of its virtue and the great reward that comes to the one who strives hard during this night. One of its blessings is the fact that Allaah revealed the Qur’aan on this night, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, We have sent it (this Qur’aan) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree).

2. And what will make you know what the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is?

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

4. Therein descend the angels and the Rooh [Jibreel (Gabriel)] by Allaah’s Permission with all Decrees,

5. (All that night), there is peace (and goodness from Allaah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn”

[al-Qadr 97:1-5]

Ibn Katheer (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: The words “*Therein descend the angels and the Rooh [Jibreel (Gabriel)] by Allaah’s Permission*” mean that the angels descend a great deal during this night because of its great blessing. The angels come down when blessings and mercy come down, just as they come down when Qur’aan is read, and they surround dhikr circles and lower their wings for the sincere seekers of knowledge out of respect for him.

It is definitely in Ramadaan because Allaah sent down the Qur’aan during this month. Allaah tells us that He sent it down in Ramadaan, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, We have sent it (this Qur’aan) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree).”

[al-Qadr 97:1]

“The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur’aan”

[al-Baqarah 2:185]

i.e., Allaah started to reveal the Qur'aan to His Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in Ramadaan.

The name "Laylat al-Qadr" is indicative of its honoured status ("the Night of Honour and Status"). Alternatively it may mean "the Night of Decree" (as translated in the quotation above), because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments"

[al-Dukhaan 44:3-4]

Qataadah said: i.e., concerning the whole of the coming year. Ibn al-Qayyim said: This is the correct view.

The apparent meaning is that that there is no reason why both meanings should not be valid.

The phrase "out of faith" means from a belief in the reward that Allaah has promised to those who pray qiyaam on this great night.

"and in the hope of reward" means, seeking the reward.

This is a great night which Allaah chose to begin the revelation of the Qur'aan. The Muslim should understand its status and seek it out and spend this night in prayer out of faith and seeking the reward of Allaah, that Allaah may forgive his previous sins. Hence the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) warned against negligence on this night and failing to spend it in prayer which deprives the negligent one of its goodness. It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "There has come to you Ramadaan, a blessed month, which Allaah has commanded you to fast. In it the gates of heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are shut, and the strong devils are chained up. In it Allaah has a night that is better than a thousand months; whoever is deprived of its goodness is indeed deprived."

We should increase our du'aa' on the nights in which it is hoped Laylat al-Qadr may be, and we should pray as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught the Mother of the Believers 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) when she said: "O Messenger of Allaah, If I know which night is Laylat al-Qadr, what should I say?" He said: "Say: *Allaahumma innaka 'afuwwun tuhibb al-'afwa fa'fu 'anni* (O Allaah, You are All-Forgiving and You love forgiveness so forgive me)."

Ibn Katheer (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: It is mustahabb to make a great deal of du'aa' at all times, and more so in Ramadaan, especially in the last ten days, and on the odd-numbered nights, and it is mustahabb to recite this du'aa': *Allaahumma innaka 'afuwwun tuhibb al-'afwa fa'fu 'anni* (O Allaah, You are All-Forgiving and You love forgiveness so forgive me)

Ahaadeeth al-Siyaam, by al-Fawzaan, p. 141.