

Fast 27

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

“Beneficent God! By the Book that makes manifest! We revealed it on a blessed night — truly We are ever warning. In which (night) is made clear every matter of wisdom...” — Ch. 44, v. 1–4.

Notes: Both the above passages speak of the *commencement* of the revelation of the Quran on a certain night. In the first passage above, which is chapter 97 of the Quran, this night is called in Arabic as *lailat-ul-qadr*, meaning the Night of Majesty or of Power.

The Quran has told us in the section about fasting in Ramadan that “the month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed” (2:185), meaning of course that its revelation commenced in that month. In ch. 97, quoted above, it is stated that it was revealed on the night called *lailat-ul-qadr*. From this statement, and from Hadith reports, we learn that this was a night during the month of Ramadan. It is considered to be one of the last ten nights, most often thought to be the 25th, 27th or 29th night of Ramadan.

The commencement of the revelation of the Quran was a momentous event, and the night on which it began is said in ch. 97 to be “better than a thousand months”. A thousand months, which is about 83 years, may be considered as the span of a human’s *physical* life. Therefore the night in which the means of man’s spiritual life was born is superior to his entire span of physical life, because the purely material life doesn’t lead to any spiritual improvement.

The mention of “every affair” in chapter 97 means that the revelation deals with all matters relating to man’s moral and spiritual development. This can also be seen from the second passage above which says that “every matter of *wisdom*” was made clear that night.

“Peace! It is till the rising of the morning” — With the coming of that revelation, man’s struggle and restlessness to find the truth is over, and he attains peace, and darkness for him is dispelled, and dawn breaks.

According to Hadith reports, and the experience of holy persons in Islam, this night of majesty, the anniversary of the start of the revelation of the Quran, is a phenomenon which occurs in every Ramadan. However, it is a completely wrong notion to imagine that prayer and worship during just this one night has a reward equal to, or greater than, the prayers and worship of a thousand months.

Ramadan is a month during which one strives for moral and spiritual advancement, purification of character, attaining nearness to God, and increasing one's knowledge of the Quran. Depending on the extent to which people have striven *beforehand* to purify themselves and open their hearts to receive the angels, they may perceive a *spiritual experience* on that night *in accordance with their capacity*. 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. The coming of the angels is always upon the heart, and not a physical phenomenon.

That spiritual experience may change a person's whole life. If that happened, then that night would be better for him than the thousand months, or 83 years, of the whole human life span.

Another interpretation of *lailat-ul-qadr* is that it can also be considered as *the whole of the period of the mission of the Holy Prophet Muhammad*. What is stated in ch. 97 about *lailat-ul-qadr* can be applied to his mission as follows.

It was a time of the deepest darkness (i.e. night), 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, as the Quran says: "These are they into whose hearts He has impressed faith, and strengthened them *with a Spirit from Himself...*" (58:22).

At the end of the period of the Holy Prophet's mission, there was a dawn breaking in the world and there was spiritual peace in the hearts. The great spiritual and moral progress that Muslims made during this period — the giving up of evil habits, practices and customs, which in some cases happened in an instant— **none of it** could have been achieved even in a thousand months outside the blessed period of the Holy Prophet. Even one moment spent usefully in the Holy Prophet's company was worth more than a lifetime of a thousand months or 83 years without his company.