

The MESSAGE Magazine

Spreading The Light of Knowledge



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Ramadhan - The Month of Forgiveness

In the name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful.

Welcome to the Ramadhan issue of The Message. This issue was put together as a general guide to encourage and help the reader gain more benefit from the month of Ramadhan.

Sadly nowadays many of us do not make the best of this special month. It is the month when the doors of forgiveness are wide open. Does this mean we sit back and relax and wait for forgiveness? No, of course not. We should strive our utmost to be amongst those whom Allah forgives during this month. After all, if the doors of forgiveness are wide open, we must still walk through them and this requires effort.

As part of that effort we should try our utmost to ensure we are praying five times a day to start with. After all, is there really any benefit to fasting if we fulfill one pillar of our faith i.e fasting and neglect another pillar i.e prayer, which is more important and second only to the first pillar of faith, the shahadah (testimony of faith).

For those that say, "I don't need to pray because my faith is in my heart" etc and other such reasons then imagine if an employee turned around to their boss and said, "I don't need to do my work as it's in my heart". Could you expect your boss to pay you if you had this attitude? No of course not. Then why should we expect forgiveness and Paradise if we take the same attitude with our prayers? Yes, it can be difficult to pray sometimes but now is the time to rectify this situation, especially as the benefits of praying are seen in this life and more importantly in the next life.

Shaytaan has spent the last eleven months whispering to us and trying to get us off the right path. Now, during this month when all the shaytaan's are chained up it is our opportunity to undo his training and step back on the path Allah intended for us...the path to forgiveness and Paradise. We should do this today and not think I'll start tomorrow or next week etc as death may come to any of us at any time.

We tend to assume that we will make it to old age. It is narrated in a hadith (a saying of the Prophet [peace and blessings of Allah be upon him]) that 50,000 years before Allah created creation, He wrote down in His Book everything that will happen - as our creator Allah knows our past and our future. This means that He has already recorded how long we will live. We could have another 30 years left, or maybe 5 years or maybe even 5 minutes but there is no doubt that our lifespan has already been written and there is no getting round this fact. Therefore the sensible person will realise this and attempt to make the best of this Ramadhan and the rest of their life. If we don't, then we really are taking a gamble with our destination in the afterlife, i.e Paradise or Hellfire.

In conclusion - Ramadhan is a golden opportunity for the Muslim to renew their Iman and character and we should all strive our utmost to make the best of this Ramadhan as it could easily be our last one. After Ramadhan one should emerge a better Muslim and person - if we don't then we need to seriously look at why not and where we have gone wrong. But rather than wait another year for next Ramadhan we should work straight away to get ourselves back on track.

All good that comes from this magazine is from Allah and any mistakes are ours so please forgive us for any shortcomings. - The Message Team.



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Reality & Obligation in

Ramadhan



During this Ramadhan do not let the sweetness of our deeds vanish into the night, leaving only emptiness. When one contemplates the texts on fasting, its wisdom and goals in Shariah, and looks at the reality of the Muslim communities, one realizes a wide gap between the reality and our obligations. Remember that Ramadhan is a bounty that Allah blessed His servants with, to strengthen their faith, and increase their piety (Taqwa). Allah said: "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become pious." (Al-Baqarah 2:183).

This article is an attempt to present the essential causes of this gap and some remedies. The primary reason for the gap is ignorance about the goals of fasting and the wisdom behind it. Many Muslims ignore the purpose and wisdom of fasting. Fasting is done merely to conform to the social environment without contemplation. If one is not aware of the divine wisdom of Shariah and its fruits in this world and in the hereafter, one will not apply it in the right way.

Goals of Fasting

Achieving Taqwa: is one of the most important wisdom of fasting. Fasting brings on Taqwa as it lessens the desire of the stomach and mutes the sexual appetite. Whoever fasts frequently would overcome these two desires more easily. This deters against committing abominations and sins and assist in controlling life leading to Taqwa.

Strengthening willpower and acquiring patience: The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) called Ramadhan the month of patience as it increases one's will power to control his desire and the selfishness of his soul. This training allows him to be strong in following Allah's commands. The most important being to carry the Message and propel it forward. The person trains himself to be patient in obeying Allah by stopping at the limits set by Allah both by way of action and abstention. Allah said: "These are the limits set by Allah, so approach them not." (Al-Baqarah 2:187).

Fasting is pure worship: The fact that he is abstaining from food and drink both in public and in secret shows his honest faith and strong love of Allah, and his knowledge and feeling that Allah is all-knowing of everything. For this reason Allah has made the reward for fasting greater than for any other type of worship. Allah said in the hadith Qudsi: "Every deed of the son of Adam will be multiplied [in rewards], the good deed by ten of its like, up to seven hundreds, up to whatever Allah wills, except fasting, it is for Me and I will reward it. He abandons his desire and his food for My sake.." (Related by Muslim) Ibn al-Qayyim said: "...And people may see that a person is not eating in front of them, but the fact that he is really abandoning his food and his desire for the sake of God is a thing that nobody can find out about, and that is the essence of fasting." (Zaad al-Ma'ad 2/29).

Relieving Muslims from life's distractions: Eating, drinking, and socializing all distract a person and weaken ties with Allah. It is by the Mercy of Allah that Muslims are ordered to fast so as not to be bothered by the intrusion of these activities. Nor by the thought about them nor the anticipation for them when devoting themselves to all types of worship. Either reading the Qur'an, offering additional prayer or making I'tikaf. For this reason the Prophet

(sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said: "Fasting is a shield, and a secure fortress against Hell fire" (Related by Ahmad).

Discovering Allah's Blessings: A person experiences the hardship of the poor. He should then be thankful to Allah Who has blessed him with His bounty while others are deprived. This should make him more sympathetic and willing to share this bounty. The poor rediscovers that fasting helps a person be more devoted to worship. More able to concentrate and meditate. He should then be able of this devotion all year long, a blessing he should thank Allah for.

Acquiring strength and endurance: It has been discovered that depriving the body of food for a period of time helps its defense and endurance mechanism. This in turn protects the body from certain diseases.

Remember that fasting is not only dependent on abstentions: Many believe that fasting consist only of certain abstentions, forgetting that Allah established certain acts of worship with fasting. Among which are:

Qiyamul-layl: The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said: "Whoever performed the night prayer during Ramadhan out of belief and anticipating God's rewards, will be forgiven his previous sins." (Related by Muslim). Performing Umrah: The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said: "An Umrah during Ramadhan is like a Hajj with me." (Related by al-Hakim).

Offering Iftar (meal) to those who fasted. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said: "Whoever feeds a fasting person has the same reward as him, except that the reward of the fasting person will not be diminished." (Related by Ahmad).

Reading and completing the Qur'an: The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said: "Fasting and [reading] Qur'an will intercede for the person: fasting will say: O Lord I forbade him eating and drinking so let me intercede for him, and the Qur'an will say: I deprived him from his night sleep so let me intercede for him," he then said: "So they will intercede." (Related by Ahmad). The Prophet



(sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) used to recite the whole Qur'an to Angel Jibreel each Ramadhan.

Giving in charity: Ibn Abbas (radhiallahu anhu) said: "The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) was the most generous among people, and he was more generous during the month of Ramadhan." (Related by Muslim).

I`tikaaf: which is to confine oneself in the masjid for prayer and invocation leaving the worldly activities. Ibn Abbas (radhiallahu anhu) said: "The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) used to perform I'tikaf during the last ten days of Ramadhan." (Related by Muslim). It is surprising that many people have abandoned I'tikaf though the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) never abandoned it from the time he arrived to Madinah until he died.

Supplication: In the verses dealing with fasting, Allah said: "And when My slaves ask you (O Muhammad) concerning Me, then answer them, I am indeed near to them. I respond to the invocations of the supplicant when he calls on Me." (Al-Baqarah 2: 186). This is an encouragement for the fasting person to increase his invocation. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said: "Three invocations will be answered: The invocation of the fasting person, the invocation of the oppressed, and the invocation of the traveller." (Related by Muslim).

Repentance: Ramadhan is the time of repentance and return to Allah, for it is a time when the devils are chained, and when many people are saved from hell fire every night by the grace of Allah.

Applying oneself in all good deeds in the last ten days of Ramadhan:

Aysha (radhiallahu anha) said: "When the last ten days come, he (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) would pray most of the night and wake his family, and apply himself, and tighten up his loincloth.", and she also said: "The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) used to strive in the last days of Ramadhan more than he did during the other days." (Related by Muslim).

Abstaining from vain talk: Sins decrease the reward of fasting although they do not annul it. The Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said: "Fasting is not [only] abstaining from eating and drinking, but abstaining from vain and obscene talk, so if someone insulted you or wronged you say: I am fasting." (Related by al-Hakim) and he also said: "Whoever does not abandon lying, then Allah does not need him to abandon his food and drink." (Related by al-Bukhari).

Common errors made during Ramadhan

Excessive spending: Ramadhan should be a time to avoid being wasteful, and learning to be prepared in facing harder times by distinguishing the needs from the luxuries. Unfortunately, many people go beyond their limits to spend during Ramadhan. Whether in the varieties of food that they savor each night, or by the other types of spending.

Staying awake during the night and sleeping during the day:

Some people sleep during most of the day when they are fasting. Ramadhan is not a time of being lazy, and this do not allow the full benefit from the experience of fasting. It is as if they have only

inverted their nights into days and vice versa. In addition, some may spend a great portion of the night indulging in eating and drinking and socializing

Spending more time in socializing: Because people invite each other more often during Ramadhan they do tend to spend more time socializing with friends, and relatives. While it is a good deed to feed the fasting person, this should not result in precious time lost in vain talk. Use the occasion for remembering Allah and offering additional prayers, and for the Da'wah to Allah.

Insisting on performing a certain number of Rakaas during the Tarawih (night) prayer to the point of not praying behind the Imam and thus forfeiting the benefit of congregational prayer. This might also bring hatred and disagreement between the Muslims of one community.

Reading Qur'an too fast: Some insist on finishing the whole Qur'an once or more, even if they have to read very fast. Although reading the Qur'an many times is desirable, this should not be done hastily, especially during the Tarawih prayer without pondering upon its meaning. Allah ta'ala said: "This is a Book which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its verses," (Saad 38:29), and the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam) said: "Those who read the Qur'an in less than three days do not grasp [its meaning]"

Socializing in I'tikaf: Many people are eager to do I'tikaf but some confine themselves in the masjid not to pray and worship Allah but to talk and socialize.

The ways of doing good are numerous in Ramadhan Many people try to perform more than they are able to. By going beyond their capabilities, they end up not performing any deed in the desired way.

Scholars and Dai'ahs should assume a more prominent role in educating the people - both by talking to them and by giving the best example in their behavior which should comply to the Shariah and following the Sunnah.

The Muslim should realize that his priorities dictate that he does what benefits him in the Hereafter and should not put worldly interests first.

The Muslim should apply himself to deepen his sense of following the Sunnah of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhe wa sallam), in every aspect of his life, at all times and especially during the month of Ramadhan. This necessitates seeking more knowledge about the Fiqh of fasting and its etiquette, assimilating the wisdom and goals of fasting, and facilitating the means that allow all the Muslims to benefit from their fasting.

We ask Allah to accept our fast and our good deeds.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

The importance of the prayer in Islam cannot be understated. It is the first pillar of Islam that the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned after mentioning the testimony of faith, by which one becomes a Muslim. It was made obligatory upon all the prophets and for all peoples.

Allah has declared its obligatory status under majestic circumstances. For example, when Allah spoke directly to Moses, He said,

"And I have chosen you, so listen to that which is inspired to you. Verily, I am Allah! There is none worthy of worship but I, so worship Me and offer prayer perfectly for My remembrance." [Taha 13-14]

Similarly, the prayers were made obligatory upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) during his ascension to heaven. Furthermore, when Allah praises the believers, such as in the beginning of surah al-Muminoon, one of the first descriptions He states is their adherence to the prayers.

Once a man asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the most virtuous deed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that the most virtuous deed is the prayer. The man asked again and again. The first three times, the Prophet (peace be upon him) again answered, "The prayer," then on the fourth occasion he stated, "Jihad in the way of Allah." [This is from a hadith recorded by Ahmad and ibn Hibban.]

The importance of prayer is demonstrated in the many of the Prophet's statement. For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"The first matter that the slave will be brought to account for on the Day of Judgment is the prayer. If it is sound, then the rest of his deeds will be sound. And if it is bad, then the rest of his deeds will be bad." [Recorded by al-Tabarani.]

The importance of the prayers lies in the fact that no matter what actions one performs in his life, the most important aspect is one's relationship to Allah, that is, one's faith (imaan), God-consciousness (taqwa), sincerity (ikhlas) and worship of Allah (ibaadah). This relationship with Allah is both demonstrated and put into practice, as well as improved and increased, by the prayer. Therefore, if the prayers are sound and proper, the rest of the deeds will be sound and proper; and if the

prayers are not sound and proper, then the rest of the deeds will not be sound and proper, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself stated.

In reality, if the prayer is performed properly with true remembrance of Allah and turning to Him for forgiveness it will have a lasting effect on the person. After he finishes the prayer, his heart will be filled with the remembrance of Allah. He will be fearful as well as hopeful of Allah. After that experience, he will not want to move from that lofty position to one wherein he disobeys Allah. Allah has mentioned this aspect of the prayer when He has said,

"Verily, the prayer keeps one from the great sins and evil deeds" (al-Ankaboot 45). Nadwi has described this effect in the following eloquent way,

Its aim is to generate within the subliminal self of man such spiritual power, light of faith and awareness of God as can enable him to strive successfully against all kinds of evils and temptations and remain steadfast at times of trial and adversity and protect himself against the weakness of the flesh and the mischief of immoderate appetites. [Nadwi, p. 24]

The overall affect that the properly performed prayers should have upon humans is described in other verses in the Quran:

"Verily, man was created impatient, irritable when evil touches him and niggardly when good touches him. Except for those devoted to prayer those who remain constant in their prayers..." (al-Maarij 19-23).

As for the Hereafter, Allah's forgiveness and pleasure is closely related to the prayers. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said,

"Allah has obligated five prayers. Whoever excellently performs their ablutions, prays them in their proper times, completes their bows, prostrations and khushu` [Khushu` in the prayer is where the person's heart is attuned to the prayer. This feeling in the heart is then reflected on the body. The person

remains still and calm. His gaze is also lowered. Even his voice is affected by this feeling in the heart. For more details on this concept (as well as the difference between it and khudhu`), see Muhammad al-Shaayi, al-Furooq al-Laughawiyyah wa Atharahaa fi Tafseer al-Quran al-Kareem (Riyadh: Maktabah al-Ubaikaan, 1993), pp. 249-254.] has a promise from Allah that He will forgive him. And whoever does not do that has no promise from Allah. He may either forgive him or punish him." [Recorded by Malik, Ahmad, Abu Dawud, al-Nasa'i and others.]

The prayers are a type of purification for a human being. He turns and meets with his Lord five times a day. As alluded to above, this repeated standing in front of Allah should keep the person from performing sins during the day. Furthermore, it should also be a time of remorse and repentance, such that he earnestly asks Allah for forgiveness for those sins that he committed. In addition, the prayer in itself is a good deed that wipes away some of the evil deeds that he performed. These points can be noted in the following hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

"If a person had a stream outside his door and he bathed in it five times a day, do you think he would have any filth left on him?" The people said, "No filth would remain on him whatsoever." The Prophet (peace be upon him) then said, "That is like the five daily prayers: Allah wipes away the sins by them." (Recorded by al-Bukhari and Muslim.)

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"The five daily prayers and the Friday Prayer until the Friday prayer are expiation for what is between them." (Recorded by Muslim.)

Jamaal al-Din Zarabozo

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Article from of Isaam.com

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How Does the Heart Fast in

Ramadhan?

میر سلام
سکینة

The guidance of the heart is the basis of all guidance, the law of all success, the origin of every deed and the head of every action. Allah (SWT) says, "And if anyone believes in Allah, (Allah) guides his heart (aright)" (64:11)

The Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) said: 'Truly there is a piece of flesh in the body which, if it be wholesome, the whole body will be healthy and which, and if it be diseased the whole body will be diseased. Truly it is the heart.'

Thus the goodness of your heart is the guarantee of your happiness in this world and in the Hereafter. Likewise, its corruption is the surest way to destruction, the extent of which only Allah knows. "In this, behold, there is indeed a reminder for everyone whose heart is wideawake that is (everyone who) lends ear with a conscious mind." (50:37)

Every creature has a heart. In reality though there are two hearts, a heart that is alive and pulsating with the light of faith. It is filled with intense conviction and God-consciousness. The other is a dead heart, covered and diseased with every wreckage and rubbish.

Allah Almighty says concerning the hearts of the foolish folk "In their hearts is disease, and so God lets their disease increase." (2:10)

"But they say, 'Our hearts are already full of knowledge.' Nay, but God has rejected them because of their refusal to acknowledge the truth: for, few are the things in which they believe." (2:88)

Allah also says "Will they not, then, ponder over this Qur'an?— or are there locks upon their hearts?" (47:24)

"And so they say, (as it were): 'Our hearts are veiled from whatever thou callest us to, (O Mohammed,) and in our ears is deafness'." (41:5)

From all these verses we learn that the hearts can become ill, they can be covered, locked and they die. The enemies of Allah have hearts in their bosoms but they do not perceive with these hearts. Hence the Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) used to say, 'O Dispenser of hearts make my heart firm in Your religion.'

The heart of the believer fasts during Ramadan and outside Ramadan. The fasting of the heart is done by emptying it of all corrupt material such as destructive forms of polytheism, false beliefs, evil suggestions, filthy intentions and degenerate thoughts. The heart of the believer

is adorned with the love of Allah. It is known to its Lord by His names and His qualities as He has described Himself. This heart explores with a discerning eye the lines of His names and qualities and the pages of Allah's making in the universe and the books of His creations.

The believer's heart is filled with a brilliant light which does not allow any darkness to remain with it. It is the light of the eternal message, the divine teachings, and the omnipotent laws. To it is added the natural light upon which the servants of Allah were created. Thus two great lights come together. "Light upon light! God guides unto His light him that wills (to be guided): and (to this end) God propounds parables unto men, since God (alone) has full knowledge of all things." (24:35)

The believer's heart glows like a lamp, shines like the sun and sparkles like the morning light. It increases in faith whenever the believer listens to the verses of the Qur'an, it grows in conviction when it contemplates, and increases in guidance when it reflects. The believer's heart abstains from pride because it breaks its fast. Pride does not reside in the heart of a believer because it is unlawful. The abode and dwelling place of pride is the heart. Hence, if it enters any heart, that person will become afflicted, foolish, arrogant and frivolous.

Allah Almighty says in a hadith Qudsi (a Sacred Tradition whose meaning is from Allah but in the wording of the Prophet): "Pride is my upper garment and grandeur is my lower one, whoever contests with me for them I will punish him" The Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) himself said: 'Whoever shows arrogance to Allah, He will humble him and whosoever is humble to Allah, He will raise him in station.'

The heart of the believer fasts and abstains from egotism. Egotism is when the individual sees himself as perfect, better than others and in possession of good qualities that are not found in anyone else. This is destruction in its most naked form. The Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) said, 'Three

things which are totally destructive: a person's self-centeredness and conceit, his reluctance to obey and his following of his desires.'

The cure for this self-importance is to look at one's own faults, one's many shortcomings, thousands of sins and misdeeds that one has committed, wrongs that one has done and forgotten but the knowledge of which are with Allah in a book. For Allah is not led astray nor does He forget.

The heart of the believer fasts and abstains from envy because it lowers righteous deed, puts out the light of the heart and stops its progress. Allah, the Most High, says in the Glorious Quran: "Or do they envy men for what Allah has given them of His Bounty?.." (4:54)

And the Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) said: 'Do not envy one another; do not inflate prices one to another; do not hate one another; do not turn away from one another; and do not undercut one another.'

The Prophet (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon Him) informed one of his companions three times that he would be among the people of Paradise. When he was asked about what was it that earned him a place in Paradise, the man said; 'I do not sleep with envy, grudge or deceit in my heart for any Muslim.' Are there any hearts that would, therefore, fast like the learned? The fast of the learned has a yearning for the Most Merciful Lord of the worlds. Their hearts fast at all times and in the early hours of morning they seek forgiveness.

O Allah guide our hearts to the straight path and make it firm on faith, O Lord of the worlds.

[From: Thirty Lessons for Those who Fast]

Article from Islamweb.net

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Advice to Muslims in Ramadhan



Presented below is a short article which summarises how we should try to conduct ourselves during Ramadhan and encourages us to maintain the momentum in worship we will hopefully have gained during this blessed month and keep up even after Ramadhan has passed.

1. Fast Ramadhan with belief and truly seeking the reward of Allah the Most High so that He may forgive you your past sins.

2. Beware of breaking your fast during the days of Ramadhan without a valid Islamic excuse, for it is from the greatest of sins.

3. Pray Salat ut-Taraweeh and the night prayer during the nights of Ramadhan - especially on Layatul-Qadr - based on belief and truly seeking the reward of Allah, so that Allah may forgive you your past sins.

4. Make sure that your food, your drink and your clothing are from halal means, in order that your actions be accepted, and your supplications answered. Beware of refraining from the halal while fasting and breaking your fast with the haram.

5. Give food to some fasting people to gain a reward similar to theirs.

6. Perform your five prayers on time in congregation to gain the reward and Allah's protection.

7. Give a lot of charity for the best charity is that of Ramadhan.

8. Beware of spending your time without performing righteous deeds, for you will be responsible and reckoned for it and will be rewarded for all you do during your time.

9. Perform `umrah in Ramadhan for `Umrah in Ramadhan is equal to Hajj.

10. Seek help for fasting during the day by eating the sahoor meal in the last part of the night before the appearance of Fajr.

11. Hasten breaking your fast after the sun has truly set in order to gain the love of Allah.

12. Perform ghusl before fajr if you need to purify yourself from the state of major impurity so that you are able to do acts of worship in a state of purity and cleanliness.

13. Cease the opportunity of being in Ramadhan and spend it with the good that has been revealed in it - by reciting the noble Qur'an and pondering and reflection of its meanings so that it be a proof for you with your Lord and an intercessor for you on the Day of Reckoning.

14. Preserve your tongue from lying, cursing, backbiting and slander for it decreases the reward of fasting.

15. Do not let fasting cause you cross your boundaries by getting upset due to the slightest of reasons. Rather, fasting should be a cause of peacefulness and tranquility of your soul.

16. Upon completion of fasting, be in a state of taqwa of Allah the Most High, being aware of Allah watching you in secret and in public, in thankfulness for His favors, and steadfastness upon obedience of Allah by doing all what He has ordered and shunning all that He has prohibited.

17. Increase in remembrance of Allah, seeking of forgiveness, asking for Paradise and protection against the Fire, especially when fasting, while breaking the fast and during suhoor, for these actions are among greatest causes of attaining Allah's forgiveness.

18. Increase in supplication for yourself, your parents, your children and Muslims, for Allah has ordered making of supplications and has guaranteed acceptance.

19. Repent to Allah with a sincere repentance in all times by leaving sins, regretting those that you have done before and firmly deciding not to return to them in the future, for Allah accepts repentance of those who repent.

20. Fast six days of Shawwal, for whoever fasts Ramadhan and then follows it with six days of Shawwal, it is as if he fasts all the time.

21. Fast on the Day of `Arafah, the 9th of Dhul Hijjah, to attain success by being forgiven your sins of the last year and the coming year.

22. Fast on the day of `Aashuraa', the 10th of Muharram, along with the 9th, to attain success by being forgiven your sins of the past year.

23. Continue being in a state of iman and taqwa and perform righteous actions after the month of Ramadhan, until you die. "And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty (i.e. death)". [Qur'an 15:99]

24. Ensure that you attain the positive effects of your acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, zakat and hajj, sincere repentance and leaving of customs that are in variance with the Sharee'ah.

25. Invoke a lot of salawat and salam upon the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, his Companions and all those who follow them until the Day of Judgment.

○ Allah make us and all Muslims of those who fast and stand in prayer during the month of Ramadhan based on belief and truly seeking Your reward so that we are forgiven our past and future sins.

○ Allah make us of those who fasted the month, attained full reward, witnessed Layatul-Qadr and attained success by permission of the Lord, Blessed and Most High.

○ Allah, verily you are Forgiver, like to forgive, so forgive us.

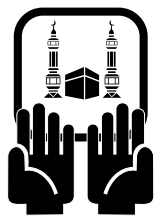
○ Lord, accept from us, verily you are the All-Hearing, all-Seeing, O Living, O Independent, O Owner of all majesty and honor.

And may Allah's blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, his family and his Companions.

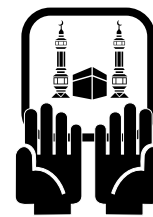
From the book "Khulaasatul Kalaam" by Shaykh Jaarullah.

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HOW TO SEEK LAYLAT AL-QADR



The night of Al-Qadr is the most virtuous night of the year. Allah says in the Qur'an: "We revealed it on the night of power [that is, Al-Qadr]. What will tell you what the night of power is? It is better than a thousand months." Any action therein, for example, reciting the Qur'an, making remembrance of Allah, and so on, is better than acting for one thousand months which do not contain the night of Al-Qadr. Al-Bukhari and Muslim record from Abu Hurairah that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said: "Whoever prays during the night of Al-Qadr with faith and hoping for its reward will have all of his previous sins forgiven."

It is recommended (mustahab) to seek the Night of Al-Qadr in the last ten nights of Ramadan. It was reported in Sahih Muslim that Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (RA) said: "the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) did I'tikaf during the first ten days of Ramadan, then he did I'tikaf during the middle ten days in a qubbah (Turkish tent) in which a mat was placed." He said: "so he took the mat in his hand and put it at the side of the tent, then he raised his head to speak to the people, so they came closer to him." He said: "I did I'tikaf during the first ten days, seeking this night, then I did I'tikaf during the middle ten days. Then someone came to me and told me that it is in the last ten days, so whoever among you wants to do I'tikaf, let him do so." So the people did I'tikaf with him. He said: "I was shown an odd-numbered night, in the morning of which I was prostrating in mud and water." Then in the morning of the twenty-first, he got up to pray Salat al-Subh (dawn prayer) and it was raining; the roof of the mosque leaked, and there was mud and water. He came out when he had finished praying, and there was mud and water on his forehead and nose."

In a report, Abu Sa'id said: "It rained on the night of the twenty-first, and the roof of the mosque leaked over the place where the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) was praying. I looked at him, when he had finished praying Salat al-Subh, and his face was wet with mud and water" (Agreed upon)

Laylat al-Qadr is in the last ten days of Ramadan, as stated in the hadith of Abu Sa'id quoted above, and as stated in the hadith of 'Aa'ishah, and in the hadith of Ibn 'Umar who said that the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Seek Laylat al-Qadr

in the last ten days of Ramadan." According to a hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Seek it in the last ten days of Ramadan, when there are nine days left, and seven days left, and five days left." (al-Bukhari)

Shaykh al-Islam ibn Taymiyah said: "But odd-numbers have to do with what is past [i.e., when one starts counting from the beginning of the month], so it should be sought on the twenty-first, the twenty-third, the twenty-seventh or the twenty-ninth; or it may be with regard to what is left, as the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: 'when there are nine left, or seven left, or five left, or three left.' On this basis, if the month has thirty days, these will be even-numbered nights, so on the twenty-second there will be nine days left, on the twenty-fourth there will be seven days left. This is how it was explained by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri in the sahih hadith, and this is how the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) prayed qiyam during this month. If this is the case, then the believer should seek it in all of the last ten days" (al-Fatawa, 25/284, 285).

However, Laylat al-Qadr is more likely in the odd-numbered nights: the twenty-first, the twenty-third, the twenty-fifth, the twenty-seventh and the twenty-ninth. According to the hadith of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Seek it in the last ten nights of Ramadan, when there are nine left, when there are seven left, when there are five left" (Narrated by al-Bukhari, 1917-1918). So it is more likely to be one of the odd-numbered nights.

In Sahih al-Bukhari it was narrated that 'Ubadah ibn al-Samit said: 'the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) came out to tell us when Laylat al-Qadr was, and two of the Muslims were arguing. He said: "I came out to tell you when Laylat al-Qadr was, and so and so were arguing, so it [the knowledge of when Laylat al-Qadr was] was taken away from me. Perhaps this is better for you. So seek it on the ninth and the seventh and the fifth.'" (al-Bukhari)

This hadith indicates how bad it is to argue and fight, especially with regard to matters of religion, and that this is a cause of goodness being taken away or concealed.

Laylat al-Qadr is more and more likely to be in the last seven days. Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that a man among the companions of the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) was shown Laylat al-Qadr in a dream, and that it was one of the last seven nights. The Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "It seems that your dreams agreed that it is one of the last seven nights, so whoever wants to seek it, let him seek it in the last seven nights" (al-Bukhari and Muslim). Muslim reported: "Seek it in the last ten nights, and if any of you are weak or unable to do that, then let him not miss the last seven."

It is most likely to be on the night of the twenty-seventh. It was reported, in a hadith narrated by Ahmad from Ibn 'Umar, and a hadith narrated by Abu Dawud from Mu'awiyah, that the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Laylat al-Qadr is the night of the twenty-seventh" (Ahmad and Abu Dawud).

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The view that it is the night of the twenty-seventh is the opinion of most of the Sahabah and the majority of scholars, and Ubayy ibn Ka'b (RA) used to assert, without saying "in sha Allah", that it was the night of the twenty-seventh. Zirr ibn Hubaysh said, I said: "What makes you say that, O Abu'l-Mundhir?" He said, "by the signs of which the Messengers of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) told us: that the sun rises that morning with no visible rays" (Muslim)

Many marfoo' ahadith were narrated which said that it was on this particular night. Ibn 'Abbas (RA) also stated that it is the night of the twenty-seventh. He reached this conclusion by means of an amazing process. It was reported that 'Umar (RA) gathered the Sahabah together and included Ibn 'Abbas even though he was very young. They said, "Ibn 'Abbas is like one of our children. Why have you brought him here with us?" 'Umar said: "He is a youth who has a good mind and who asks lots of questions." Then he asked the Sahabah about Laylat al-Qadr, and they agreed that it was one of the last ten nights of Ramadan. He asked Ibn 'Abbas about it, and he said: "I think I know when it is: it is the night of the twenty-seventh." 'Umar said, "What makes you think that?" He said, "Allah made the heavens seven, and the earths seven, and the days seven..." So Ibn 'Abbas thought that it was the night of the twenty-seventh because of this analysis. This has been soundly reported from Ibn 'Abbas.

Another of the ways in which the conclusion was reached that it is the night of the twenty-seventh is by noting that the word *fiha* (therein) in the aayah (interpretation of the meaning): "Therein descend the angels and the Ruh [Jibreel]" [al-Qadr 97:4] is the twenty-seventh word of Surah al-Qadr [in the original Arabic]. There is no shar'i evidence to support this manner of analysis, and there is no need for such calculations, because we have sufficient shar'i evidence available to us.

The fact that it is usually the night of the twenty-seventh - and Allah knows best - does not mean that this is always the case. It could be the night of the twenty-first, as mentioned in the hadith of Abu Sa'id quoted above, or it could be the twenty-third, as mentioned in the report of 'Abd-Allah ibn Unays (RA) quoted above. According to a hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both), the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Seek it in the last ten days of Ramadan,

when there are nine days left, and seven days left, and five days left." (al-Bukhari)

Some of the scholars thought that it is more likely that Laylat al-Qadr moves and does not come on a specific night each year. Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "This is the apparent meaning because of the conflict between the sahih ahadith on this matter, and there is no way to reconcile the ahadith apart from saying that Laylat al-Qadr moves."

Allah has concealed this night so that His slaves will strive to seek it, and will strive hard in worship, just as He has concealed the hour of jumu'ah, and so on.

So the believer should strive hard during the days and nights of these ten days, seeking Laylat al-Qadr and following the example of our Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him), and he should strive in making *du'aa'* and seeking to draw close to Allah.

The Best Dua on Laylat al-Qadr

It was reported that 'Aa'ishah said: "I said, 'O Messenger of Allah, what do you think, if I witness Laylat al-Qadr, what should I say?' He said: 'Say, O Allah, You are Forgiving and Generous, and you love forgiveness, so forgive me.'" (Ahmad, al-Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah)

I'tikaf on the Last Ten Days of Ramadan

A greater virtue is attached to I'tikaf on this night than on any other night of the year. I'tikaf means staying in the mosque to worship Allah, may He be exalted. The Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) used to spend these ten days in I'tikaf, as stated in the hadith of Abu Sa'id quoted above. It was reported from 'Aa'ishah (RA) that the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) used to do I'tikaf during the last ten days of Ramadan until he passed away, then his wives did I'tikaf after him (Agreed upon). There is also a similar report narrated from Ibn 'Umar.

When the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) wanted to do I'tikaf, he would pray Fajr, then enter the place where he was to do I'tikaf, as was stated in al-Bukhari and Muslim from the hadith of 'Aa'ishah.

The four imams and others (may Allah have mercy on them) said that the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him)

entered it before the sun set, and they interpreted the hadith as meaning that he entered his place of I'tikaf and kept away from people after Salat al-Subh, not that this was the time when he started his I'tikaf.

It is Sunnah for the person in I'tikaf to keep himself busy with worship. He should not go out of the mosque except in the case of a pressing need and it is forbidden for him, in case he goes home for necessity, to have intercourse or to do anything that leads to it, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning): "And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikaf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations leaving the worldly activities) in the mosques." [al-Baqarah 2:187]

The Signs by Which Laylat al-Qadr Is Known

The first sign: it was reported in Sahih Muslim from the hadith of Ubayy ibn Ka'b (RA) that the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) announced that one of its signs was that when the sun rose on the following morning, it had no (visible) rays.

The second sign: it was reported from the hadith of Ibn 'Abbas narrated by Ibn Khuzaimah, and by al-Tayalisi in his Musnad, with a sahih isnad, that the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Laylat al-Qadr is a pleasant night, neither hot nor cold, and the following day the sun rises red and weak."

The third sign: it was reported by al-Tabarani with a hasan isnad from the hadith of Wathilah ibn al-Asqa' (RA) that the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Laylat al-Qadr is a bright night, neither hot nor cold, in which no meteors are seen."

These three sahih ahadith explain the signs which indicate Laylat al-Qadr.

It is not essential for the one who "catches" Laylat al-Qadr to know that he has "caught" it. The point is to strive hard and to be sincere in worship, whether or not one knows that one has "caught" it. It may be that some of those who do not know that may be better with Allah and higher in status than those who did know which night it was, because the former strove hard.

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