

Last Ten Blessed Nights

By **Mona Salama**

The last ten nights of Ramadan are very special. These are the nights that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to spend in constant worship, *du`aa'* and *dhikr*.

The last third of Ramadan is the time for release from Hellfire, as the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said in a Hadith reported by Salman Al-Farisi: **"...The first third of the month of Ramadan is the time for mercy, the second third is for forgiveness, the third is for release from Hellfire..."** (Ibn Khuzaymah)

Laylat Al-Qadr is your time to live with sincerity, joy and with a real sweetness that you will experience - the sweetness of *Iman*. Even if you were to live one thousand months with sincerity and dedication, this one night is much better.

It is the night when the seal of the Prophets received the seal of revelations; the Glorious Qur'an.

If you are interested in living the Night of Power, and obtaining the treasures of the last 10 days, if you have the intention and determination, let us remind you of some of the things that you should do.

Wake Up the Family

`A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "During the last ten nights of Ramadan, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would tighten his waist belt and spend the night in worship. He would also wake up his family." (Al-Bukhari)

Umm Salamah relates that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) woke her up one night, and said: "Glory be to Allah! What trials have been sent down during this night! What trials have been sent down, so that the denizens of the bedchambers will be awakened! O Lord! To be clothed in this world by being naked in the Hereafter." (Al-Bukhari)

Love and Be Loved

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) told us that Allah the Almighty says,

"My servant does not draw close to Me with anything as he does by carrying out what I have made obligatory upon him. My servant continues drawing closer to Me by performing optional deeds such that I love him, and when I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight by which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his leg with which he walks. Were he to ask of Me I would surely give him and were he to ask Me for refuge I would surely grant it to him."

Be a Thankful Believer

Narrated Al-Mughira:

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to stand in prayer or pray till both his feet or legs swelled. He was asked why (he offered such an unbearable prayer) and he said, **"Should I not be a thankful slave?"** (Al-Bukhari)

Exerting Oneself in Worship

`A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "I had never known Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) to read the entire Qur'an in a single night, or to spend the whole night in prayer until the morning, or to spend a whole month in fasting – except in Ramadan." (An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah)

And, "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would exert himself in worship during the last ten nights more than at any other time of the year." (Muslim)

She (may Allah be pleased with her) also told us that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would "tighten his waist belt", (devote oneself fully to this task.)

Make Up for What You Might Have Missed

Almighty Allah is the Oft-Forgiving, the Compassionate and Merciful. He loves this Ummah and loves to forgive and have mercy upon its believers. He gives them chance after chance so that they would return to Him. The last 10 days are simply 'another chance' for those who missed the first 20 days and need to repent. The chance is still there and the doors are wide open. So, do not miss them again!

(Say: "O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.)
(Az-Zumar 39:53)

Seeking Laylat Al-Qadr

A Muslim should seek this special night by spending the last ten nights of Ramadan engaged in various acts of worship. These include reading the Qur'an, *dhikr*, and begging Allah's forgiveness

Ibrahim al-Nakha'i says: "Good deeds performed on this night are better than those performed consistently for a thousand months."

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) related that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "**Whoever spends Laylat Al-Qadr in prayer, believing in Allah and seeking His reward, all his past sins will be forgiven.**" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Allah the Almighty says: **(Laylat Al-Qadr is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend therein, by the permission of their Lord, with every decree. (This night is) peace, until the rising of the dawn.)** (Al-Qadr 97: 3-5)

Retreat in the Mosque (*i`tikaf*)

Observing a retreat in the mosque is one of the best things we can do during the last ten nights of Ramadan. `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) told us: "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to observe a retreat in the mosque during the last ten nights of Ramadan up until he died. His wives continued to observe this practice after his death." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

The practice of *i`tikaf* helps us to devote our hearts exclusively to Almighty Allah. The person engaging in *i`tikaf* keeps this intention close to mind and seeks the blessings of Almighty Allah. It is important that he does not forget the reason why he is observing this retreat.

Generosity

We are encouraged to be extra generous during the last ten nights of Ramadan. Ibn `Abbas related: "Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) was the most generous of all people in doing good, and he was at his most generous during the month of Ramadan. Jibreel used to meet with him every year throughout the month of Ramadan, so the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) could recite the Qur'an to him. Whenever Jibreel met with him, he became more generous than a beneficial breeze." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Al-Nawawi says: "Generosity and open-handedness are strongly encouraged in Ramadan, especially during the last ten nights. By doing so, we emulate the example of Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) as well as that of our Pious Predecessors..."

Remembrance and *Dhikr*

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "**Indeed, this world, with all it contains, is cursed, except for the remembrance of Allah and what follows it from deeds pleasing to Allah, scholars (of religion) and seekers of knowledge.**" (Tirmidhi).

Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "**Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes every night down on the nearest Heaven to us when the last third of the night remains, saying: 'Is there anyone to invoke Me, so that I may respond to his invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone seeking My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?'**" (Muslim)

Seek Acceptance

`Ubadah ibn As-Samit (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "**Whoever gets up at night and says: -- 'La ilaha il-lallah wahdahu la sharika lahu lahu-l-mulk, wa lahu-l-hamd wahuwa 'ala kullishai'in Qadir. Alhamdu lil-lahi wa subhanal-lahi wa la-ilaha il-lal-lah wa-l-lahu akbar wa la hawla Wala Quwata il-la-bil-lah.'**"

(None has the right to be worshipped but Allah. He is the Only One and has no partners. For Him is the Kingdom and all praises are due to Him. He is Omnipotent. All praises are due to Allah. All glory is due to Allah. And none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and Allah is Great and there is neither Might nor Power Except with Allah). And then says: -- Allahumma, Ighfir li (O Allah! Forgive me). Or invokes (Allah), he will be responded to and if he performs ablution (and prays), his prayer will be accepted." (Al-Bukhari)

Du`aa' of Laylat Al-Qadr

Imam Ahmad recorded from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), that she said, "'O Messenger of Allah! If I find the Night of Laylat Al-Qadr what should I say?'" He replied, "**Say: O Allah! Verily, You are the Oft-Pardoning, You love to pardon, so pardon me.**" (At-Tirmidhi)

Make a Personal *Du`aa'* List

Ask yourself what you really want from Almighty Allah. Make a list of each and every thing, no matter how small or big it is, and whether it deals with this world or not. Almighty Allah loves to hear from us.

Once you did, be sure that Allah will answer your *du`aa'*, either by giving you what you wanted, or by giving you a better thing, or changing your *Du`aa'* to hassanate (good deeds) that weighs in your scale when you meet Him.

Make Up With Other Muslims

Quarrelling and disagreement was the reason why the exact day of Laylat Al-Qadr was not revealed to us, so we should not lose its reward by making the same mistake.

`Ubadah ibn As-Samit (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) came out to inform us about the Night of Qadr but two Muslims were quarreling with each other. Therefore, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, **"I came out to inform you about Laylat Al-Qadr but such-and-such persons were quarreling, so the news about it was taken away; yet that might be for your own good, so search for it on the 29th, 27th and 25th (of Ramadan).**" (Al-Bukhari)

Evaluate Yourself

Ask yourself the questions that need to be asked. Evaluate where you are and where you are going. Let this evaluation lead you to feel happiness for the good you have done and remorse for the bad you have done.

Worshipping with Knowledge

Imam Ahmad recorded from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), that she said, "O Messenger of Allah! If I find Laylat Al-Qadr what should I say?" He replied, **"Say: 'Allahumma innaka 'Affu, tuhibbul 'afwa, fa'fu'annee' (O Allah! Verily, You are the Oft-Pardoning, You love to pardon, so pardon me).**" (Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i)

It is recommended that we supplicate with this as we seek the blessed night that the Quran was revealed in. Have we pondered over its meanings?

Al-'Affu is one of the Majestic Names of Almighty Allah. Linguistically, it means to pardon. *'Aafiyah* is Allah's defense of His servant from disease, tribulation, fears, doubts, and so on.

This name occurs in the Qu'ran five times, once with the Name *al-Qadir*, and the rest with *Al-Ghaffur*. *Al-Ghaffur* also means to wipe away a person's sins. Combined with *Al-'Affu* it means that Almighty Allah overlooks and pardons a person's sin, and then wipes it completely away.

Why would this name be coupled with *Al-Qadir*? *Al-Qadir* is the One who is powerful, able to do all things, the One with the right and power to punish His slaves for sinning. What does this have to do with neglecting one's sins?

In our interpersonal relationships, sometimes we are compelled to forgive each other for things that have been done to us. It may be because of a favor someone has done for us, or pressure from someone. By combining *Al-'Affu* with *Al-Qadir*, Allah the Almighty is telling us that He has all power and every right to punish us for our sins; however, He (out of His Mercy) has chosen to forgive us and pardon us.

May Allah the Almighty let us all live to see Laylat Al-Qadr this year, and benefit from it, and be amongst His righteous and knowledgeable worshippers.