

The Night of Power

We revealed it (the Quran) on the Night of Power. Would that you knew what the Night of Power is like. Better is the Night of Power than a thousand months. On that night, the angels and the Spirit descend by their Lord's permission, with all His decrees. That night is peace, till the break of dawn.(Surah-Al-Qadr-97).

This surah speaks about the promised great night which the whole universe marked with joy and prayers. It is the night of perfect communion between this world and the Highest Society. It is the night which marked the beginning of the revelation of the Quran to Prophet Muhammad (Pbuh), an event unparalleled in the history of mankind for its splendour and the significance it has for the life of mankind as a whole. Its greatness is far beyond human realisation. "We revealed it on the Night of Power. Would that you knew what the Night of Power is like. Better is the Night of Power than a thousand months."

The Quranic statements which relate this great event radiate with Allah's clear and shining light: " We revealed it on the Night of Power." There is also the light of angels and the Spirit moving between the earth and the Highest Society. " On that night, the angels and the Spirit descend by their Lord's permission with all His decrees." In addition, there is also the light of dawn which the surah represents as perfectly harmonious with the light of the Quran and the angels as well as the spirit of peace: "That night is peace, till the break of dawn."

The night in question here is the same night referred to in surah 44 (Smoke): " We revealed it (the Quran) on a blessed night, for We would warn mankind, on a night when every precept was made plain as a commandment from Us. We have ever sent forth messengers as a blessing from your Lord, who hears all and knows all." It is established that it is a night in the month of Ramadan as stated in surah 2 (The Cow): " In the month of Ramadan, the Quran was revealed, a book of guidance distinguishing right from wrong." This means that the Night of Power marked the beginning of the revelation of the Quran to the Prophet (Pbuh) and his charge of conveying it to mankind. Ibn Ishaq related that the first revelation consisting of the opening of surah 96, took place in the month of Ramadan, when the Messenger of Allah was at his devotion in the cave of Hira. A number of traditions specifying this night have come down to us: some stress that it is the 27th of Ramadan, others the 21st, a few others say it is one of the last ten days and some others do not go beyond saying that it is in Ramadan.

Its title " The night of Power" maybe taken to mean assignment, designation and organization, or it may mean value, position and rank. Both meanings are relevant to that great universal event of the revelation of the Quran and the assigning of the message to Prophet (Pbuh). For it is the greatest and most precious of all events which the universe has witnessed.

It is also the event which explains more clearly than any other the place of assignment, designation and organization in the life of mankind. This night is better than a thousand months.

Many thousand months and many thousand years have passed without leaving behind a fraction of the changes and results brought about in that blessed and happy night. This night is of an essence too sublime to be understood by human intellect: "Would that you knew what the Night of Power is like It is great because Allah has chosen it for the revelation of the Quran, so that its light may spread throughout the universe, and divine peace may spread in human life and conscience. That night is great because of what the Quran includes: an ideology, a basis for values and standards and a comprehensive code of moral and social behaviour, all of which promote peace within the human soul and in the world at large. It is great because of the descent of angels and Jibril in particular, by their Lord's permission carrying the Quran which was first sent down on that night. They fill all the space between the heaven and the earth in such a splendid, universal celebration, vividly portrayed in this surah.

When we look today in retrospect, after the lapse of numerous generations, at that glorious and happy night and imagine the fascinating celebration the world witnessed on that night and ponder over the essence of revelation and its far-reaching effects on human life and its values, we appreciate the greatness of this event. We can then understand to some extent, why the Quranic reference to that night is made in such an equivocal way: "Would that you knew what the Night of Power is like."

On that night, every matter of significance was made plain and distinct, new values and standards were established, the fortunes of nations were determined and values and standards were shifted.

Humanity, out of ignorance and to its misfortune, may overlook the value and importance of the Night of Power. When humanity ignores all that, it loses the happiest and most beautiful sign of grace which Allah bestowed on it.

Humanity is miserable in spite of higher production levels, and better means of existence. The splendid light which once illuminated its soul has been put off: the brilliant touch of happiness which carried it high up to the Highest Society has been smothered. The peace which overflowed in the hearts and minds has disappeared. Nothing can compensate for the happiness of the soul, the heavenly light and the elevation to the loftiest ranks.

We, the believers in Islam are commanded not to forget or neglect this event. The Prophet (Pbuh) has taught us an easy and enjoyable way to commemorate that night, so that our souls may always be in close communion with it and with the universal event which took place in it. He has urged us to spend this night of each year in devotion. He said, "Seek the Night of Power in the last ten nights of Ramadan." He who spends the night of Power in worship, with a pure motive of faith and devotion, will have all his past sins forgiven." Islam is not mere formalities. Hence the Prophet specified that the consecration of that night must be motivated by faith and devotion. This could make its consecration by an individual an indication of his full awareness of the far-reaching effects of what took place on that night.