



Laylatu-l-Qadr

Peace until the Coming of the Dawn

Allah (swt) reveals to us in the Holy Qur'an in Surah Fussilat, 'āyat 53:

We shall show them Our signs on the horizons and in themselves until it becomes clear to them that this message is the Truth. Is it not enough that your Lord is watching over all things.

Without doubt there is no doubt concerning the meeting with their Lord. Without a doubt, He encompasses all things.

And, of course, important for this week:

Truly, We sent it down on the Night of Destiny. And what will make you understand the Night of Destiny? The Night of Destiny is better than a thousand months. And in it the angels and the spirit descend by the permission of their Lord, bearing with them all the orders. Peace! Until the coming of the dawn.

Salaam aleykum. Inshā'a-Llāh, everybody is well. What does peace until the rising of the dawn mean? Peace until Fajr. In each daily prayer, we should seriously and solemnly declare to Allah (swt), Thee alone do we worship and to Thee alone do we seek help. The humble believer, the committed believer realizes that their very life and their very lifestyle can and should be *ibada*/worship. What is in your mind when we say worship? Raising your hands, bending over, making *rukhu*, making *sajda*? What is in your mind when you say worship?

Our lifestyle will determine to a large extent what our worship is and when it is. Tirmidi (ra) abu Daoud said, "*Dua, supplication is worship.*" We know that Allah (swt) has encouraged believers to take advantage of certain times during the day, and the week, and the year to make *du'ā* and special prayers. Many of our *shuyukh* have given us instructions in many other kinds of prayers, like *salatu-l-tasbih* or *salatu-l-salaam*, for example. And such an occasion presents itself during Ramadan, especially during Laylati-l-Qadr. On this night, the most important event in the history of human beings takes place.

It is said that the Qur'an descended with the Archangel Jibreel and was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (sal). The forces of revision and cultural entropy, and the overriding Christianization of history are now presented in various forms of formation to us. Like a few years ago, we learned that there had been some documents found in Yemen. These documents showed a different version of Qur'an. They were buried, because you bury Qur'an. You have to be very careful of how you dispose of Qur'an. They were found in a quite early, maybe in the first 200 years origin after Islam and the Prophet (sal). The apparent assumption of the writers is that it proves that the Qur'an like other religious texts is a historical development. That was the argument of these German people who found it.

That would be fine, except that Muslims believe that the Qur'an has not been changed since it was revealed, over 23 years. So their premise is wrong; "their" meaning those who found it. This could have been the work of people who were revising the Qur'an, and it was discovered that they were revising it and so they buried it. They had not been copying it correctly. And any Muslim would know that. We don't know, for example, who wrote those documents. We don't know whether the Qur'an was represented to them correctly or incorrectly. We don't

know that. They may have decided to adjust it here and there, like the Christians at the time adjusted the Injil. They interpreted it and then adjusted it. So maybe it occurred to a group of people to do that with Qur'an. We only know that they found early text that was changed. That is all we know. All the names in the article are Western names. That was all the names on the article I read. Only two Germans saw the text, and not one of them was Muslim. So they have little understanding of the importance of looking at all sides of an issue.

Anyway, my point is that this type of revisionism has crept into every one of our lives. We adjust. We make revisions in our lives, even in this community—in Islam, in Christianity, in Judaism. When some of you were Christians, or Jews, or atheists, you were living in a very revisionist world. There was nothing that said to you, “This is how it was passed down.” Oh, some of the Christians were told “this is the inherent word of God.” But there was no proof that this was the inherent word of God. There was no methodology that said that. There was no historical reality about how things were kept, how they were written down, and it did not begin with a revelation either, for that matter.

So we live in a very revisionist world. And part of the world wants to make the Muslims look bad. And part of the world wants to make Jews look bad. And part of the world wants to make Blacks look bad, and certain whites not good, and people from Iraq look bad or people from Morocco look bad, or whoever, from the South, from the North, fat people, short people, tall people, blond people, bald people. That is the mentality of the world we live in.

What does it mean, “**peace until fajr.**” In the Qur'an, which is the revealed word of Allah (swt), we know how it was collected; we know how it was testified to; we know how it was measured against what other people had seen; we know the whole

process of that—how the Prophet Mohammed (sal) revealed it, and how the people remembered it and scratched it down, sometimes in mud, sometimes in parchment. They committed it to memory. We know this is what happened. The proof is that those people were challenged. If you can go write a better Qur'an than this, go ahead and do it. Isn't that what the Qur'an said? The Qur'an said that. The Prophet said that. "If you can write a better Qur'an, no matter how long it takes you, go ahead and write it." People couldn't write it. The nuances of the language, the poetry of the language, the depth and the meaning – it couldn't be written. Even so, to this day, especially in Lebanon, people keep trying to put out false translations of the Qur'an, false *'āyāt* of the Qur'an and Hadith, also.

But the Qur'an was not just revealed one thousand four hundred and thirty four years ago over 23 years. Qur'an is revealed every single moment of every single day, if you know how to hear it. It is revealed as it was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (sal) at the appropriate moment, for us. That means that the meaning has to be grasped, not just the words. Laylati-l- Qadr is better than a thousand months. Well, do the math. What does that mean? It is about 83.3 years, to be exact. Even if it said that it was better than 500 months, about 45 years – I have lived over 45 years; some of you have, most of you have lived over 45 years – a lot can happen in 45 years—minutes of 45 years. Now I wouldn't want the thousand months to look like the 45 years I have lived, necessarily.

What kind of 1000 months? A thousands months of believing? A thousand months of praying? A thousand months of humble love for Allah (swt)? A thousand months of serving humanity, caring and being considerate? A thousand months of companionship, and mercy, and forgiving, and of not deviating from your goals and intentions? Now that is a thousand months. That is a real worthwhile thousand months. Wouldn't you say? I would venture to say that except for the young people

here who have had a good 100 or so months in their life, most of us would not want a thousand months that were... If we could remake those thousand months, we would make it along those lines, wouldn't we? More prayer. More service. More humility. More love. Working for justice. More piety. I think we would, wouldn't we, if we could?

I would love a thousand months with the knowledge that I have of the way things should be, and the surprise and the beauty and the excitement of the way the children live, the purity with the way they look at life. Wouldn't you like to have the knowledge that you have and have their perspective in life? It won't happen by just living every day. It does not happen, you don't get anywhere by just treading water in a pool. You have to swim in life. Allah gave us this life and some of you chose this life in this community. You wound up in an Islamic community of Sufis, caring about other human beings, working exceptionally hard, and we have all felt the pressures of that commitment. Sometimes we complain a little, but we don't stop.

Now, by the grace of Allah (swt), even with the cancers that have taken lives, have given meaning to our lives; and those who have been cured have given meaning to our lives. The wellness has given meaning to our lives and the passing of our dear ones has given meaning to our lives. Now we are not immortal, but the most authentic related story of Laylati-l-Qadr indicates that it can happen at any moment during a period of time. Why is that important? Why do we say [to look for Laylatu-l-Qadr] "on the odd numbered nights of Ramadan?" There is a *hadith*.

One day the Prophet was going out to tell the companions the exact night of Laylati-l Qadr. On the way, he came across two men arguing, by the Will of Allah, and he forgot. Later he recalled it, but he was instructed not

to reveal this information. Had they been allowed, he once remarked, "I would have told you the exact time."

It was intentional that he was distracted. Why? First of all, he received something from Allah (swt), and what is the first thing you want to do? You want to share it. It is a beautiful day, and you say, "Oh, what a beautiful day it is today." Or "What a starry night. Come outside, look at the stars. Take a minute." We want to share the beauty. It is the first impulse. But Allah wanted us to seek it. He wanted us to come toward Him. So He created this time, and the implication is that something very special happens in this time. It is important that the Qur'an was descended on this night. That means not one *'āyat*; it means the whole Qur'an. And then, where did it go? It went into the heart of Rasūlu-Llāh. Then it had to come out of him, one by one, at the right time.

After the first revelation, he was not receiving any revelation. He didn't, but it was in him, because we are told that it came on the night of Laylatu-l-Qadr. Where did it go? Did it go to a bank deposit vault or under a rock somewhere? It went into the Prophet (sal) because that was who it was destined for. Then it had to come out of him. Just like us, we are given moments to remember, to turn our attention. So that what has been given to us by Allah (swt), apparently in linear time (*zaman*), is really just a question of lifting a veil in the right moment, paying attention (*tawajjuh*). The sincere believer who worries day and night about his sins, and negligence, and misdeeds, like most of us, I hope, waits patiently for Ramadan and for the Laylati-l-Qadr. During that time, we hope that here is the month where maybe I can get it straight. Maybe I can do what is right. Maybe I can pay attention to Allah, not my desires, not my wants, not the carrot on the stick in front of the donkey that I am.

The doors of hell are closed, it is said, during Ramadan. What does that mean? Does that mean there is no Shaytan in the world? I wish. We wouldn't have to do anything. We wouldn't have any distractions or anything. Maybe the doors are closed. No one is going to enter hell on that day. But what does it mean? Perhaps it also means that the *shaytans*, our own *shaytans* are still with us and this is the time that we can cleanse ourselves. For example, we can make our five prayers a day; we can make our *taraweeh* prayer; we can make *du'ā*; we can read the whole Qur'an. We can do all the wonderful things that we can do, stay up late at night, have people over for *iftar*. We can do all those things during Ramadan. But what if we allow our desires to come along? What if we follow our whims and our passions? What if we look for signs in the *dunya*? What if we look for signs in the *dhahir* instead of the *batin*? What about that?

I know that every one of us in this room had to be tempted towards something, or distracted by something, or worried about something, or read the signs of Allah for our personal life, or jobs, or whatever it may be, during the month of Ramadan, instead of putting our attention where we thought we wanted to put it at the beginning of Ramadan, and where we knew we should put it at the beginning of Ramadan. When we started to get diverted from that, we allowed ourselves to get diverted from that. We allowed ourselves to get diverted because it smelled good, looked good, tasted good, or felt good. Is it true? All of us.

Here is the month. Maybe I can get it straight. Is it over? No, just about half over. My advice to all of us, including myself, is to pay attention. Do not get distracted. Put all that other stuff on the shelf. Let it get a little dusty, and see if your eye goes to it again. Maybe my desires will abate. Maybe I will be forgiven by Allah (swt). Maybe my addictions will go away. Maybe my fears will dry up. Maybe I can find my way in a right direction for my life and my work better now. I know Allah (swt)

will forgive me, because the gates of hell are closed and the doors of Jannah are open, and His Mercy is flowing upon us, His Fayd upon us.

The Prophet Mohammed (sal) promised that all those who bear down during the last ten days shall have their sins forgiven. To achieve this, the Prophet (sal) said words like, “seek and pursue and work hard.” Over and above that, so many signs are described for us like the ones in Surah Laylati-l-Qadr, **“Peace until the rising of the dawn.”** We have talked about signs of that day, “It is going to be a cloudy day, maybe a rainy day that is on that day.” Many *shuyukh* and others have reported signs, some *hadith*. But what is important is that the Prophet (sal) described the night as serene and peaceful and tranquil.

Now if you go into the day or the night uptight and agitated and worried, are you going to be able to note a serene and tranquil night? Probably not. Now maybe it is so serene and so peaceful and so tranquil that you can't miss it. But I only know of a few *shuyukh* who have said that they never missed the night of Laylati-l-Qadr. (Shaykh names a few of the predecessors.) I don't think that there is anybody in this room who has never missed a Laylati-l-Qadr. I may be wrong and if so, I apologize. Maybe it is true that the sun will rise without sharp rays, but diffused. The servant makes these nights alive with prayer, and reading and reflecting on Qur'an, and he makes *du'ā* to Allah for the sense of penance, beseeching Allah for His forgiveness. He is inspired by the Prophet's words,

“Our Lord, the Most Exalted and Most High comes down to the lowest heavens during that last third of each night and pronounces, ‘Whoever makes du'ā, I shall answer it. Whoever asks for something, I shall grant it. Whoever seeks forgiveness, I shall forgive him.’”

The believer, conscious of his or her own sins continues to beseech Allah in and out of prayer, in and out of the physical prayer. The only concern is to cleanse oneself of forgetfulness in this life, and that this life propagates in one's heart, knowledge and remembrance. So one will cleanse oneself of the sins that darken the heart and make it disobedient and distracted. Such a person begs of Allah to keep him or her away from misfortunes from this world, and punishment of the grave, and torments of hell, and asks Allah (swt) in steadfast ways to allow us to struggle to maintain our Islam in this world, and to ask Allah (swt) to overlook our shortcomings, and to forgive us of our laziness and our neglect. It is hard to remember THAT, for most people. It is hard to remember what you ask for, what you pray for, for most of us.

A sincere devotion on that night will render the believer forgetful for a time, until the appearance of the rays of the morning and the *adhan* of the *fajr* – to become abstracted in that moment. After *fajr*, the sun rises over the horizon as sweet and tranquil. Night is finished and we will know that our efforts were worthwhile because we were in the ocean of the Laylati-l-Qadr. The Muslim will rejoice knowing that it is possible that Laylati-l-Qadr has come. Whoever stays up in prayer and in remembrance of Allah on this night, fully believing in Allah's promise of reward on this night and hoping to seek that reward from Allah (swt) – not from people, not from circumstances, giving up worrying about the job or the business or whatever it is, the distractions and attractions – will be forgiven for the past sins. That is what the "peace until *fajr*" means. It is not peace *at fajr*, but peace *until fajr*. Where does it begin... where does it begin? *Asalaam aleikum*.