

The Night of Destiny (Laylat Al-Qadar)

Yesterday I covered the main aspects of the last ten nights of Ramadhaan and I purposely left out the details of one of the most significant matters, which is the Night of Destiny (Laylat al-Qadar). I wanted to single it out in a talk because it is something that needs to be addressed before the ten nights, because you have to prepare for it.

You have had many opportunities in Ramadhaan and this is one of your final shots at it. As we mentioned in the first Khaatirah:

مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

This is the final shot at it, the Night of Destiny (Laylat al-Qadar).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LAYLAT AL-QADAR

An entire Surah with five verses was revealed about it and it was named after it, and then if you go to the beginning of Surat ad-Dukhaan you have approximately four to six verses in that Surah speaking about Laylat al-Qadar. So you have nearly eleven verses in the Qur'an and an entire Surah talking about that one night, the Night of Destiny (Laylat al-Qadar).

It is not any ordinary night, it is a night the Qur'an was revealed in.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿القدر: ١﴾

Verily! We have sent it (this Qur'an) down in the night of Al-Qadar (Decree). (Surat al-Qadar: 1)

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ... الدخان: ٣ ﴿﴾

We sent it (this Qur'an) down on a blessed night [(i.e. night of Qadar) in the month of Ramadhaan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar]. (Surat ad-Dukhaan: 3)

Now why was it called Laylat al-Qadar? For one of two reasons or for both reasons together. It goes back to the root word of Qadar (قدر), which in Arabic means the value and importance. The Night of Destiny (Laylat al-Qadar) is deeply valued and we are going to speak about its value Inshaa Allah. The second reason is Qadar comes from destiny, it means your destiny is written in this night.

Someone will say stop here, you are confusing me. One minute you tell me it was written fifty thousand years before the sky and the Earth was created and now you are telling me it is written in the Night of Destiny (Laylat al-Qadar)? Make up your mind. Well here is how it goes, it was written in the fifty thousand years before the sky and the Earth was created and now on this specific night the tasks of that year are given to the angels.

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿الدُّخَانُ: ٤﴾

Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments. (Surat ad-Dukhaan: 4)

The tasks for the entire year are given to the angels. So and so is going to die, so and so is going to be prosperous and so and so is going to become poor. The tasks for that entire year, so there is no time to sleep on a day that your provision is written. Your matters are given to the angels to carry out the tasks (both good and bad) on this night, so turn to Allah in mercy. Some people are going to be dead men walking on this night.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿الْقَدْرِ: ٢﴾

And what will make you know what the night of Al-Qadar (Decree) is? (Surat al-Qadar: 2)

If I were to buy something valuable and you come to me and ask me for it, I tell you do you even know how much that cost? Immediately it is embedded in your mind that it is a very, very high price and such a high figure beyond that which is normal and comprehensible. Allah tells you do you even know what Laylat al-Qadar is? Do you even know what you are going to get out of Laylat al-Qadar?

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿الْقَدْرِ: ٣﴾

The night of Al-Qadar (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months (i.e. 83 years and 4 months)). (Surat al-Qadar: 3)

That is your night brothers and sisters. If you are asked what is your night, you say it is Laylat al-Qadar. Some people say their night is the wedding night, the

graduation night or the night their child was born on. It is good stuff and not bad, however how many say their night is the night that the burden of sins was lifted off their backs? Wallahi it should be the happiest night of your life. The night you spend a few hours in worship with Allah, yet you get 83.33 years worth of reward. Your Allahu Akbar, your Subhan Allah and your Alhamdulillah is as if you said it non-stop for a thousand months. Your recitation and repentance is as if you did it non-stop for 83.33 years. Your standing before Him is as if you did it for thirty thousand days. Do you know what Laylat al-Qadar is?

Tell me by Allah, has he not been cheated who misses out on the blessings of this night? Has he not wronged and oppressed himself, he who spends it in vain or in prohibited gatherings and settings? Abandon that comfortable sleep. Do not recline to laziness, especially on this night. Fix your feet firm to your Lord in humility and get those 83.33 years worth of reward. It is not something anyone with his right mind misses out on.

تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿القدر: ٤﴾

Therein descend the angels and the Rooh [Jibreel] by Allah's Permission with all Decrees. (Surat al-Qadar: 4)

In the authentic Hadith in Sahih al-Jaami' and others, the angels descend more than the numbers of stones on this Earth and Jibreel comes down with them. How beautiful, have you imagined that? That explains the peace of that night. Jibreel the angel who stopped coming down when the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam died, now it is a super special occasion so he comes down. The angels love the best, especially in worship. They are worshippers who never disobey Allah.

... لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿التحریم: ٦﴾

Who disobey not, (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded. (Surat at-Tahreem: 6)

They have al-Bayt al-Ma'moor up there to worship by. Their nights and days are in worship but they come to this Earth on that night. They would rather be worshipping on the Earth in this night, due to the value and significance of that night on this Earth. The angels make the journey to come to this Earth and leave the heavens for this night, and some escape the opportunity and take a journey into the darkness of sins.

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿القدر: ٥﴾

Peace! (All that night, there is Peace and Goodness from Allah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn. (Surat al-Qadar: 5)

THE SIGNS OF LAYLAT AL-QADAR

Peace is that night and it is a sign of that night. There are many authentic Hadith and there are many non authentic Hadith many mention, and we will mention some of them. Some of the signs appear during the night itself and others occur the following morning, and what is authentic on that is what Imaam Muslim reported by Abu Hurayrah radhiallahu 'anhu. He said we were talking about Laylat al-Qadar and when the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam heard them, he said anyone amongst you remembers the night when the moon arose and it was like a piece of plate (a waning moon like half of a plate). That is the first one and then there are other Ahaadith.

Abu Dawood at-Tayaalisi, al-Bazaar and Musnad Ahmad reported from 'Ubaadah Ibn as-Saamit that he said the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam said Laylat al-Qadar is a clear and shining night as if there were a bright moon in it. Look at that, pay attention to the wording. A bright night and notice how he said as if it was a bright moon. The brightness of that night is Noor Allah put in it and from the angels coming down, as if it was a bright moon. It is not from the moon, the brightness is from something else (the angels going up and down and the brightness Allah put in it). The Hadith also goes on to say it is a calm and tranquil night, it is neither cold nor hot and nor are any shooting stars thrown in it (in that morning). Those are some of the signs of Laylat al-Qadar.

Some scholars said the winds will be settled in it, others said one may see a dream about it, some said they might see an exceptional sweetness during their worship and Salah in that night and those are the opinions of some legitimate scholars. Some say the dogs do not bark in it but that is not correct at all, there is no proof on that and that is false.

Those are some of the signs on that night, now what is after that? The following morning the sun appears white and without rays (beamless). According to Ibn Hajr and others, it is possible to pinpoint the exact night by those signs. At-Tabari and Ibn al-'Arabi said that everyone gets reward of that night even if they cannot pinpoint the exact night. You get the reward even if you do not know it. Some including Ibn Hajr mentioned that you need to see a sign to get the full reward, otherwise you get the reward of a normal day. Only those who see the sign will get the reward of a thousand months according to this opinion. That is the weaker of the two opinions and that is a very weak opinion. Anyone who worships Allah and it turns out to be that night (whether he saw the signs or not), Inshaa Allah Ta'aala he is going to get the full reward.

As-Subki and others suggested that if one knows it (if he sees the sign), he should not tell anyone because that is like a Karaamah (somewhat of a miracle) to that believer and it should be kept secret. Why? To avoid Riyaa' (show off) and envy as in the verse in Surat Yusuf:

قَالَ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُؤْيَاكَ عَلَىٰ إِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيدُوا لَكَ كَيْدًا ۗ إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿يوسف: ٥﴾

He (the father) said: "O my son! Relate not your vision to your brothers, lest they arrange a plot against you. Verily! Shaytaan is to man an open enemy!" (Surat Yusuf: 5)

When Yusuf saw the nice dream, Ya'qoob did not want him to say that dream to them. Another reason is so it will not occupy your time. You run around telling people I saw this and that sign and I am sure it is this night, but instead you should occupy yourself in Ibaadah.

THE PRECISE NIGHT OF LAYLAT AL-QADAR IS UNKNOWN

Now the question everyone asks about this every year is about the famous Hadith when the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam went out to tell the Sahaabah. He was going to tell them the precise night but then he saw two quarreling and he forgot. He said I came to tell you and I forgot, that is the mercy of Allah and the mercy of the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam that we do not know. It is from the mercy of Allah that He made His Messenger sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam forget it and not tell us. How is it mercy? Yes it is mercy. Had we known it I would be the first one to neglect all of Ramadhaan, wait for that night, do a little bit of Ibaadah and then go back to sleep. But he said it is one of the ten nights so you can gain much reward out of those ten nights, and then it narrowed down to one of the odd nights of those ten nights. Assume with me it is one of the three hundred and sixty five nights, it is still worth seeking it. If he said it is one out of the three hundred and sixty five nights, it is worth seeking it in every one of those three hundred and sixty five nights because you are getting thirty thousand days worth out of anything you do in it.

Pay attention to this example. If I say I am going to write a date on a piece of paper (one day out of the days of 2012), I am going to hide it and if you give me a dollar on that day I wrote and hid you get in return from me thirty thousand dollars, a wise person with less than an average mental capacity would get three hundred and sixty five together, set them aside and give me the dollar every day. That way he is going to be guaranteed not to miss out on that great bargain. The worst case scenario is that he loses a few hundred, but what is he going to gain for sure? Thirty thousand dollars. That is Laylat al-Qadar, work one night out of five nights and you get thirty thousand nights worth. Allah was merciful when He narrowed it down for us, He could have said it is one out of the three hundred and sixty five days of the year and it would be worth pursuing. He did not even narrow it down to the month of Ramadhaan, but He narrowed it down to the ten nights for us and the odd nights of the ten nights (which is only five days) according to the most popular opinion by the 'Ulamaa.

Then you get someone who says which one of those five nights is it? Now that is getting too stingy with Allah. Work in worship. That Laylat al-Qadar may be the determining night. It may be something you did on it that pleases you when you stand naked and uncircumcised before the scale on the Judgment Day (the Day of Terror). It may be what pleases you when you stand before Allah the Creator of the Universe and the Creator of the Heaven and Hell. It may be one thing you did on that night that pleases you in that stand.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ ۚ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ ﴿١﴾ يَوْمَ تَرُؤْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَىٰ وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢﴾ ﴿٢﴾ الْحَجَّ

O mankind! Fear your Lord and be dutiful to Him! Verily, the earthquake of the Hour (of Judgment) is a terrible thing. The Day you shall see it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling, and every pregnant one will drop her load, and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state, yet they will not be drunken, but severe will be the Torment of Allah. (Surat al-Hajj: 1-2)

Do not be stingy with Allah. It may that immense reward you do on that night that gets you the success you are awaiting. It may be that night that gets you your book in your right hand and you run to your family saying:

...هَاؤُمُ اقْرَءُوا كِتَابِيَهٗ ﴿الْحَاقَّة: ١٩﴾

“Take, read my Record!” (Surat al-Haaqqah: 19)

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR LAYLAT AL-QADAR

Now let us get more practical. You are going to say okay you convinced me, now what do I do?

When you are on pursuit of Laylat al-Qadar, you do everything we mentioned in the previous Khawaatir. You do Salah, Ibaadah, Qur’an, Dhikr and everything you know of but this one has a specific authentic Du’aa to it. When you are pursuing the night of Laylat al-Qadar you should say it and say it more so in the final ten nights as much as you can because it could be one of the final ten nights (more narrowed down to the odd nights).

عَائِشَةَ أُمُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا قَالَتْ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ، أَرَأَيْتَ إِنْ
وَأَفَقْتُ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ ، مَا أَقُولُ ؟ قَالَ قُولِي : اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تُحِبُّ
الْعَفْوَ ، فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

O Allah You are the Pardoner who likes to pardon, so pardon me.

Pardon ('Afuw), it is not Ghafoor. Why not Ghafoor? Ghafoor and 'Afuw mean to forgive but why 'Afuw? Literally speaking, 'Afuw means to erase and all the Arabs used to say:

عفت آثار القوم

When the traces of the footsteps in the desert would be gone, they would say that meaning it is erased and this is going to help explain it.

What is the difference between the two? The 'Ulamaa have given many differences. Some say forgiveness ('Afuw) is for leaving obligations and the forgiveness of Ghafoor is for doing the Haraam. That is an opinion. It gets deeper than that, some said Maghfirah (مغفرة) of Allah (Ghafoor) is forgiving you, yet it is still written and you are going to be asked about it on the Judgment Day. You are forgiven, but it is not erased until the Judgment Day and then it will be erased. That is taken somewhat from a Hadith in Bukhari where Allah brings someone closer and closer, He says do you remember this sin and that sin and he admits to all the sins and then Allah says to Him:

إِنِّي سَتَرْتُ عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا ، فَأَنَا أَعْفِرُهَا لَكَ الْيَوْمَ

I covered it in the life before and then I forgive it.

They say this is the Maghfirah, so what is the 'Afuw? It is a higher status than that and that is what we are aiming for. It is when Allah forgives you and erases it totally, so it is not even going to be brought up on the Judgment Day. 'Afuw is when Allah forgives, erases and gets you and the angels to forget about it on the Judgment Day so you will not be embarrassed. 'Afuw is when He is pleased with you, pleased that after the sin you went deep in sincere repentance.

'Afuw comes many times in the Qur'an and five of those times it comes combined with the All Powerful. He is able to punish but He pardons you.

إِنْ تُبْدُوا خَيْرًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ أَوْ تَعْفُوا عَنْ سُوءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفْوًا قَدِيرًا

﴿النساء: ١٤٩﴾

Whether you (mankind) disclose (by good words of thanks) a good deed (done to you in the form of a favour by someone), or conceal it, or pardon an evil, verily, Allah is Ever Oft Pardoning, All Powerful. (Surat an-Nisaa': 149)

'Afuw and Ghafoor come combined in the Qur'an and it is possibly to show that you can choose Maghfirah and Allah will forgive you, but you can go a step further and try harder and get the 'Afuw where it will be fully erased. Whatever way you look at it, it seems that 'Afuw is an exaggerated form of Ghufraan (غفران) with more rewards to it. It is a higher status and a higher honour of forgiveness. From my personal humble observation when I read the Qur'an, I notice that when Allah forgives the real super major sins or tells people to forgive, He mentions 'Afuw. For example, when the people of Musa worshipped the cow:

وَإِذْ وَاَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ اَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَاَنْتُمْ

ظَالِمُونَ ﴿البقرة: ٥١﴾

And (remember) when We appointed for Musa forty nights, and (in his absence) you took the calf (for worship), and you were Dhaalimoon (polytheists and wrong doers, etc). (Surat al-Baqarah: 51)

When Allah forgives them, He says:

ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿البقرة: ٥٢﴾

Then after that We forgave you so that you might be grateful. (Surat al-Baqarah: 52)

He uses the word 'Afuw, not Ghafoor. Even when Allah talks about those who mocked the reciters of the Qur'an in the Battle of Tabook, He says:

لَا تَعْتَدِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِكُمْ ۗ اِنْ نَعَفُ عَنْ طَائِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ نَعَدِبُ

طَائِفَةً بِاَنْهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿التوبة: ٦٦﴾

Make no excuse; you have disbelieved after you had believed. If We pardon some of you, We will punish others amongst you because they were Mujrimoon (disbelievers, polytheists, sinners, criminals, etc). (Surat at-Tawbah: 66)

He says:

إِنْ نَعَفُ عَنْ طَائِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ

Na'fu not Naghfir (نغفر), because mocking Islamic rituals, matters or believers is a super major sin.

Then fleeing from the battle which is another super major sin, when Allah mentions that He says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ
مَا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾

عمران: ١٥٥ ﴿﴾

Those of you who turned back on the day the two hosts met (i.e. the battle of Uhud), it was Shaytaan who caused them to backslide (run away from the battlefield) because of some (sins) they had earned. But Allah, indeed, has forgiven them. Surely, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Forbearing. (Surat Aali Imraan: 155)

He says:

وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ

He uses the word 'Afaa instead of Ghafoor, because these are super super major sins.

We are trying to achieve the higher status of the 'Afuw subhaanahu wa ta'aala.