

Night of Majesty

(Lailat al-Qadr)

Introduction:

To all Muslims throughout the world, fasting and the Night of Majesty (*Lailat-al-Qadr*) are inseparable. The ordination of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) to the Prophetic Office¹ on the Night of Majesty (*Lailat-al-Qadr*) through the stewardship of Archangel Gabriel, marks a most significant point in the history of the world. That history marks three significant interlinking facts: They are the ordination of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*), the commencement of the Holy Qur'an authored by Almighty God and the commencement of Islam as a Faith. All these three facts are uniquely historical as sealing of the Final Prophet, sealing of the final revealed scripture and sealing of Islam as the final revealed religion.

Discussion on the Night of Majesty (*Lailat al-Qadr*):

- 1) Fasting is effectively the whole of the Islamic month of Ramadan in the Islamic calendaring system (which is lunar-based), and which is 11-12 days shorter than the Gregorian solar-based calendar (standard international calendar)². For Muslims, fasting is really one month of compliance test in exactness to the religious performance prescriptions stated in the Holy Qur'an³.
- 2) It is now necessary to delve deeper into the discussion on fasting and *Lailat al-Qadr* in Muslim scriptures. Fasting may be for 29 or 30 days, depending on the moon cycle. The remaining five odd-date nights of last ten days in the month of Ramadan are of special significance, and one of these nights is the Night of Majesty and called as *Lailat al-Qadr*. It is interchangeably referred to as the Grand Night. In consideration of the name, it is important to fully comprehend the Majestic aspect of this special night. The midpoint of these odd-dates (25th, 27th and 29th) days of month of Ramadan is the 27th night. This midpoint date has been universally accepted and practised, regardless of country, language and ethnicity.

¹ Prophetic Office has been explained to some detail later at Footnote 11.

² As detailed, the Islamic calendaring system is lunar-based whereas the Gregorian calendar is solar-based. Hence there will always be differences in the two calendar systems. This difference varies between 11-12 days, considering leap years. The Gregorian calendar is better known as the Western calendar or —Christian calendar— as it was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. Taking into consideration the differences of 11-12 days between the two calendars, the Islamic events will not consistently align to the Gregorian calendar and will always shift backward by 11-12 days in steady retraction. The lunar based calendar has 354 days only, compared to the standard calendar of 365 days.

³ The immediate next day after completion of one month's fasting, is the special celebration day called *Eid-al-Fitr*. (Means festival to break off fasting). *Eid-al-Fitr* is joyously celebrated, not because people can now resume regular mealtimes, but it is a celebration for honouring those dedicated people who fasted for a month, abstained from stated activities, are the successful brave ones, who followed all the prescribed requirements for Muslims; and most importantly, kept away from all evils.

- 3) Different countries have given it a numerically descriptive name, according to their vernacular. For example, in India, this event is widely called *Sathweisein* as an expanded version of the Hindi word for numerals 27.
- 4) Fasting in Islam is not a fixed Gregorian calendar event, such as Christmas and New Year.
- 5) Does *Lailat al Qadr* also shift accordingly? Since *Lailat al-Qadr* is the 27th night in the fasting month of Ramadan, it is without any doubt an inherent feature in tandem, at fixed times within that month, and so expected to progressively shift along in same pace as the main month of Ramadan.
- 6) What is the Majestic aspect of this special night? It was on this night, in the month of Ramadan 610AD, that Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) received his very first revelation, which historically became the glorious commencement of Divine authorship of the Holy Qur'an, and which is basically the 19 verses of Chapter 96 of the Holy Qur'an: **HQ96:1-19**⁴ *"Read in the name of your Lord Who creates — creates man from a clot (of blood) — read and your Lord is most Generous, Who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know. No! Man is surely inordinate, because he looks upon himself as self-sufficient. Surely to your Lord is the return. Have you seen him who forbids a servant when he prays? Do you see if he is on the right way, or enjoins observance of duty? Do you see if he denies and turns away? Does he not know that Allah sees? No! If he does not stop, We will seize him by the forelock — a lying, sinful forelock! Then let him summon his council, We will summon the braves of the army. No! Do not obey him, but prostrate yourself, and draw near (to Allah)."* These 19 verses become encapsulated as the roll out total of the description and life-cycle of mankind from conception and birth, material life on earth and material death on earth, and then to the ultimate trial of all mankind on the great Day of Judgement, when Almighty God alone is the Supreme Judge.
- 7) This introductory first-revealed chapter of 19 verses to the Holy Qur'an, and so to Islam, is also most magnificently further validated at Chapter 74 and verse 30: **HQ74:30** *"Over it are nineteen."* The numeric 1 and 9 and its numerical value of 19 is not only the most difficult prime number ever known (divisible only by 1 and 19), but serves as the master-key to all the authorship, editorial and structural engineering of the Holy Qur'an, in terms of its chapters, sections, verses, references for the number of times paired-gender issues and various paired-descriptions of all features have been mentioned, throughout the 114 chapters of the Holy Qur'an. There are 57 different sets of different mathematical combinations structured into the Holy Qur'an, as authored by Almighty God. The number 19 is not as feeble as superficially visible! It is made up of 1 and 9 and the first and last of single numerals in the range 1-9.

⁴ The first five verses were revealed that night and the balance of fourteen verses were revealed at later date.

- 8) In similar twinkling glory, the Holy Qur'an is also material evidence that Almighty God is the first and last (1 and 9) of Divine Power and no other consideration in worship between a person and Almighty God. The cumulative total of each of these magnificently paired-descriptions are exactly divisible by the most difficult prime number 19, with no remainder. The Holy Qur'an was revealed with perfect Truth and all in a Balance.
- 9) This aspect of the magnificence of the Holy Qur'an is given at **HQ42:17** "*Allah is He Who revealed the Book with truth, and (He revealed) the measure; and what will make you know that perhaps the Hour is near.*"
- 10) It is not prudent to dwell on the scientifically discovered marvellous facts about 19 in this very short article —the Night of Majesty (*Lailat al-Qadr*). In other words, the Holy Qur'an is forgery-proof Scripture and beyond the capacity of authoring by ordinary mankind. To further add concrete credibility to the Divine authorship of the Holy Qur'an, the Holy Qur'an gives unconditional open challenge to mankind to produce the like of it, as —**HQ31:27** "*And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea with seven more seas added to it (were ink), the words of Allah would not be exhausted. Surely Allah is Mighty, Wise.*"
- 11) Inasmuch as the anniversaries of persons' births are accepted as birthdays, *Lailat al-Qadr* is also the anniversary of the introduction of Holy Qur'an and so to commencement of Islam to mankind on Earth. The above further explains the Majestic aspect of *Lailat al-Qadr*, also referred to as the Night of Majesty or the Grand Night.
- 12) Are Fasting and *Lailat al-Qadr* specifically identified in the Holy Qur'an? Fasting is one of the five compulsory obligations⁵ expected of any Muslim of both genders. The compulsivity of fasting is upon those persons in good health, generally from adolescence to senior adulthood. There is specific Ordinance in the Holy Qur'an, as **HQ2:183** "*O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil.*" A further Ordinance explores deeper and wider, as at **HQ2:184** "*For a certain number of days. But whoever among you is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. And those who find it extremely hard may effect redemption by feeding a poor one. So whoever does good spontaneously, it is better for him; and that you fast is better for you if you know.*" The same Ordinance in the Holy Qur'an clarifies the purposeful imposition of *Lailat al-*

⁵ The five obligations are in essential descending order: (1) Belief in One Almighty God (Allah) only and no consideration whatsoever to any description of idolatry and polytheism. (2) Prayer five times daily consistently. (3) Practising of Charity. (4) Fasting for those who are in good health and free of permissible exemptions. (5) Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) to Mecca for those who have both the capacity and affordability to make that journey and back, and at same time, leave sufficient funds for the daily needs of the spouse and family. Obligations (1) to (3) must be performed by all Muslims, regardless of physical capacity, health and affordability. (4) Fasting is desired obligation to all, but there are mitigating circumstances, which in the main concerns peoples' health and alternate opportunities have been established as compensations. (5) Pilgrimage is also a desired obligation, provided the intending pilgrim meets the terms and conditions, prescriptive to *Hajj*.

Qadr, at HQ2:185 “The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to people and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion. So whoever of you is present in the month, he shall fast in it, and whoever is sick or on a journey, (he shall fast) a (like) number of other days. Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you, and (He desires) that you should complete the number and that you should exalt the greatness of Allah for having guided you and that you may give thanks.”

Having established that the Holy Qur’an was first revealed in the month of Ramadan, the Holy Qur’an gives and bears Own Divine witness, at **HQ97:1-5** *“Surely We revealed it on the Night of Majesty —And what will make you comprehend what the Night of Majesty is? The Night of Majesty is better than a thousand months⁶. The angels and the Spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord — for every affair —Peace! It is till the rising of the morning.”* The final verse explicitly concludes that *Lailat al-Qadr* is at that one specific night only but expires prior to sunrise. These five verses (**HQ97:1-5**) immediately followed the introductory revelation of the whole of Chapter 96 when Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) was first visited by the stewardship of Angel Gabriel on the 27th night of the month of Ramadan in 610AD.

- 13)** What exactly is fasting in Islam? Fasting is a capsule of virtues, comprising fundamental compliance with the Ordinances in the Holy Qur’an (**HQ2:183**), and strengthening both spiritual and five moral values in people who fast. This includes abstaining from certain activities from dawn to dusk, such as abstaining from food and drink and sexual intercourse, during the stipulated times under fast.
- 14)** In recorded history, all Israelite prophets fasted in some form according to the prescriptions valid during their eras. There is some certainty on other Prophets, who were not from the Israelite mainstream⁷. This conclusion comes from the content of **HQ2:183** in the Holy Qur’an.
- 15)** It is also a self-auditing progressively continuous process in making a better person out of the wider broadband of mankind. Once a person successfully completes a month of fasting and in full compliance to all prescribed requirements, then that person must analyse and review his/her past actions and struggle to extend compliance of virtues for the next eleven months. That, then brings a person full-circle back to where the full compliance started and it simply means that the person has now proven track-record that he/she can easily become better person in full compliance and conformance.
- 16)** It is also prudent to identify who must fast and who are exempted? As stipulated in the Holy Qur’an, all persons of both gender are compelled to fast,

⁶ A thousand months equates to 83.3 years of human life, generally the average life of most people on Earth. It is also subtle hint that Muslims must annually endeavour, to observe and celebrate the Night of Majesty (*Lailat al-Qadr*).

⁷ The fasting practised by past Prophets differed somewhat according to their geographical era and cultures.

this is as at **HQ2:183**⁸. “O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil.” This stipulation is required both as a spiritual discipline and a moral discipline in obedience to Almighty God.

17) Notwithstanding the broad thrust of compulsion for fasting, the Holy Qur’an also allows certain communities and adult people in certain situations, to adjust their hours from regular fasting⁹. This must be done in concurrence with their National religious Heads.

18) Are fasting and *Lailat al-Qadr* documented anywhere at all? Both fasting and *Lailat al-Qadr* are specific stipulations in the Holy Qur’an, **HQ2:183**. Accordingly, the whole of Chapter 97 is clear authority and documented proof of *Lailat al-Qadr*.

19) What is the History of Fasting? Based on the declaration at **HQ2:183**, the immediate conclusion is that all Prophets before the birth of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) were detailed to fast, but according to different prescriptions to suit the levels of civilization and the particular countries’ cultures, as practised thousands of years ago. All Prophets fasted in certain specifications. Whilst it must be recognized that the Holy Qur’an is not a register of all past Prophets, we are informed that Almighty God had sent His Prophets, numbering in excess 124,000 and that there is not a nation where Allah did not send His Messengers as His Ambassadors on earth. The authority on numbers of Prophets is by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal¹⁰ in his Musnad No 21257: “There were 124,000 Prophets with Prophet Adam as the first Prophet and Prophet Muhammad the Last and Final Prophet (*peace on them all*), which included 313 as Messengers.”

20) Some prophets have been mentioned by name, but more specially linked to certain events, which are given as examples and as part of His case studies and moral instructions to mankind. As examples we are given names such as Adam, Lot, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Solomon, David, Moses, Jesus (*peace on them all*). All these prophets have been mentioned and recognised for their religious work in previous scriptures, prior to the Holy Qur’an. They are all on record has having practised systems of fasting but without *Lailat al-Qadr*, as *Lailat al-Qadr* is specific and only for Prophet

⁸ **HQ2:183**. “O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil.” This stipulation is required both as a spiritual discipline and a moral discipline in obedience to Almighty God.

⁹ They are as (a) People living in the close circles of Polar Regions of North and South poles where periods of darkness and daylight exceeds 24 hours. (b) People who are sick and need to take medicines regularly. (c) People travelling on journeys extending over different time zones. They must resume fasting and make up the missed fasts after Ramadan. (d) Women who are pregnant with child. (e) Women who are breast-feeding babies. (f) Girls/women on monthly periods. They also must continue fasting and make up the missed fasts after Ramadan. (g) Very old people dependent on meals and medication during the daylight hours.

¹⁰ He was Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (b.780-d.855 AD).

Muhammad (*pbuh*) with his ordination to the Prophetic Office¹¹ and the revelation of the Holy Qur'an over a space of 23 years¹².

- 21)** What is the reward for correct and prescriptive fasting in the month of Ramadan? Whilst the Holy Qur'an has mentioned aspects of reward in more than 150 places all over the Holy Qur'an, it most graciously has specific mention of the rewards for fasting and abstaining from vices and respecting the five pillars of Islam; and the balance of fairness is for both genders, as —**HQ33:35** *“Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women, and the humble men and the humble women, and the charitable men and the charitable women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their (own) chastity and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember — Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.”*

Conclusions on the Night of Majesty (*Lailat al-Qadr*):

- a) The Night of Majesty (*Lailat al-Qadr*) is an inseparable triad event, comprising the ordination of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*), the commencement of the Holy Qur'an as final revealed scripture and commencement of Islam as final revealed religion, all directly from Almighty God but delivered through the stewardship of Archangel Gabriel.
- b) The pristine greatness of the Night of Majesty (*Lailat al-Qadr*) is better than one thousand nights of blessed prayers.
- c) There should not be any new Prophet, any new revealed religion, and any new revealed scripture after the comprehensive manifestation of Islam in 632AD.

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¹¹ The Prophetic Office (Spiritual) is a terminology taken to mean all the servants of Almighty God. Servants of Almighty God are taken to mean Prophets and Messengers ordained by divine revelations and all His angels, who deliver revelations and errands to His servants. What constitutes the Prophetic Office? From names of Prophet Adam (*as*) to Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*), a total of 124,000 Prophets (*Nabi*) were ordained by Divine revelations, but directly delivered to them by the stewardship of Archangel Gabriel, as spiritually contracted servants. Out of 124,000 Prophets, only 313 are Messengers (*Rasul*). Out of 313 Messengers, only 25 have been mentioned by name in the Holy Qur'an. Note: that every Messenger (*Rasul*) is also a Prophet, but every Prophet (*Nabi*) is not a Messenger. All of these 124,000 prophets were regular human beings who must eat food, drink water, breath air and need atmospheric pressure to stay alive. The figure of 124,000 prophets is quoted by *Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal* in his *Musnad* No 21257. Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) was the Last and Final Prophet and after his death in 632AD, that sealed off all prophets of any description whatsoever being ordained by Divine revelations, to serve humanity on earth. This is stated in the Holy Qur'an at **HQ33:40** *“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets. And Allah is ever Knower of all things.”* Seal means total shutting off arrival of any prophet of whatsoever description: No new prophet and no re-entry of any of the past 124,000 prophets will eventuate.

¹² The period of revelation of the Holy Qur'an was 610-632AD.