

- books of tafsir and hadith,
- books on the lives of the Prophets, upon whom be _peace,
- books of fiqh, and so on.

It is also preferred to set up a small tent in the courtyard of the mosque as the Prophet did.

¹³ Narrated by AbuSa'id al-Khudri
Sahih Al-Bukhari 1.777

Once I went to AbuSa'id al-Khudri and asked him, "Won't you come with us to the date-palm trees to have a talk?" So AbuSa'id came out and I asked him, "Tell me what you heard from the Prophet (peace be upon him) about the Night of Qadr."

AbuSa'id replied, "Once Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) performed i'tikaf (seclusion) on the first ten days of the month of Ramadan and we did the same with him. Gabriel came to him and said, 'The night you are looking for is ahead of you.' So the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed the i'tikaf in the middle (second) ten days of the month of Ramadan and we too performed i'tikaf with him. Gabriel came to him and said, 'The night that you are looking for is ahead of you.'

In the morning of 20th Ramadan the Prophet (peace be upon him) delivered a sermon, saying 'Whoever has performed i'tikaf with me should continue it. I have been shown the Night of "Qadr"; but have forgotten its date however, it is on the odd nights of the last ten nights. I saw in my dream that I was prostrating in mud and water.'

In those days the roof of the mosque was made of branches of date-palm trees. At that time the sky was clear and no cloud was visible, but suddenly a cloud came and it rained. The Prophet (peace be upon him) led us in the prayer and I saw the traces of mud on the forehead and on the nose of Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him). So it was the confirmation of that dream."

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar
Sahih Al-Bukhari 3.242

Allah's Apostle (peace be upon him) used to practise I'tikaf in the last ten days of the month of Ramadan.



If thou wert in doubt as to what
We have revealed unto thee, then
ask those who have been
reading the Book from before
thee....
(Surah 10 verse 94)

**THE
NIGHT OF
POWER
AND
THE DAY OF
HIS POWER**

THE NIGHT OF POWER AND THE DAY OF HIS POWER

THE NIGHT OF POWER

Every year Muslims celebrate Laylat al-Qadr, ‘the Night of Power’ or the ‘Night of Decree’, during the last ten days of Ramadan.¹

• What happened on the first Laylat al-Qadr?

Muslims believe that the angel Gabriel (Jibril), whom Islam calls *Ruh al-Quddus* (‘the holy Spirit’), conveyed the divine revelation -the beginning of the Qur’an - to Muhammad in the cave at Mount Hira.² This is how Surah 97 of the Qur’an describes it:

Surah 97 Qadr

1. We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the night of Power:
2. And what will explain to thee what the Night of Power is?
3. The Night of Power is better than a thousand Months.
4. Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah’s permission on every errand.

A *hadith* (a report or saying of Muhammad), elaborates that revelation came in the form of ‘good dreams’ or visions.³

• What is the significance of Laylat al-Qadr?

To Muslims, this event was pivotal. They believe that the Qur’an is the guide to salvation, revealing the divine will, enabling human beings to obey it and thus obtain the possibility of Paradise. (Surah 2:136⁴)

• Was Laylat al-Qadr miraculous?

Bukhari and Muslim record from AbuHurayrah that the Prophet, upon whom be peace, said: “Whoever prays during laylat al-qadr (the ‘night of power’) with faith and hoping for its reward will have all of his previous sins forgiven.”(H1)

As to the supplication during the night of qadr, Aisha said: “I asked the Messenger of Allah: ‘O Messenger of Allah, if I know what night is the night of qadr, what should I say during it?’ He said: ‘Say: O Allah, You are pardoning, and You love to pardon, so pardon me.’” (H2: Reported by Ahmad, Ibn Majah, and by Tirmidhi, who called it sahih.)
T1: Allaahumma inna-ka ‘afuwwun tuHibbu l-’afwa fa-’fu’an-nii. (F191)
H1: 2-1.034 H2:

¹⁰ Narrated by Anas ibn Malik
Mishkat Al-Masabih 2096

... Then when their festival day comes, i.e. the day when they break their fast, Allah speaks proudly of them to His angels saying, “My angels, what is the reward of a hired servant who has fully accomplished his work?”
They reply, “Our Lord, his reward is that he should be paid his wage in full.”
He says, “My angels, My male and female servants have fulfilled what I have made obligatory for them, and then have come out raising their voices in supplication. By My might, glory, honour, high dignity and exalted station, I shall certainly answer them.” Then He says, “Return, for I have forgiven you and changed your evil deeds into good deeds.” He said that they then returned having received forgiveness. Bayhaqi transmitted it in Shu’ab al-Iman.

¹¹ 715 Fiqh us Sunnah 3:144-b 1b:472 3j:146 RN2

Ramadan: Laylat Al-Qadr: (1/3) Excellence

Laylat al-Qadr (the ‘night of power’) is the most virtuous night of the year. Allah says in the Qur’an:

“We revealed it (the Qur’an) on the ‘night of power’.

What will tell you what the night of power is?

It is better than a thousand months.”(Q1)

Any action therein, for example, prayer (salat), reciting the Qur’an, making remembrance of Allah,

and so on, is better than acting for one thousand months which do not contain the ‘night of power’.

Q1: s97:1 s97:2 s97:3

¹² 728 Fiqh us Sunnah 3:151-a 1b:480 3j:152 SR5 BP2

* Spiritual Retreat (I’tikaf) Acts: Commendable: (1/2*) Worship and Study

* Blessings on the Prophet: Occasions: (*6/14*) During I’tikaf

It is preferred for the one who is making i’tikaf to perform many supererogatory acts of worship and to occupy himself with

- prayer (salat),

- reciting the Qur’an,

- tasbih, tahmid, tahlil and takbir (i.e. glorifying and praising Allah, extolling His oneness and greatness),

- istighfar (asking Allah’s forgiveness),

- invoking blessings and peace on the Prophet, upon whom be peace, and

- du’a (supplication to Allah),

and other such all acts of obedience that bring one closer to Allah. Included among these actions are studying and reading:

⁴ Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik
 Narrated by Malik ibn Anas 46.3
 The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, ‘I have left two matters with you. As long as you hold to them, you will not go the wrong way. They are the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet.’

⁵ Narrated by AbuHurayrah
 Sahih Al-Bukhari 6.504
 The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ‘Every Prophet was given miracles because of which people believed, but what I have been given, is Divine Inspiration which Allah has revealed to me...’

⁶ Narrated by AbuHurayrah
 Mishkat Al-Masabih 1962
 Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said, ‘‘Ramadan, a blessed month, has come to you during which Allah has made it obligatory for you to fast. In it the gates of Heaven are opened, the gates of al-Jahim are locked, and the rebellious devils are chained. In it Allah has a night which is better than a thousand months. He who is deprived of its good has indeed suffered deprivation.’’
 Ahmad and Nasa’i transmitted it.

⁷ Narrated by Anas ibn Malik
 Mishkat Al-Masabih 2096
 Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said that when Laylat al-Qadr comes, Gabriel descends with a company of angels who invoke blessings on ever who is standing or sitting and remembering Allah, who is Great and Glorious...

⁸ Narrated by Abdullah ibn Umar
 Sahih Muslim 2617
 Some persons among the Companions of the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) were shown Laylat al-Qadr while sleeping in the last week (of Ramadan). Thereupon Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: I see that your dreams agree regarding the last week; so he who wants to seek it should seek it in the last week (during the night).

Narrated by Abdullah Ibn Umar
 Al-Muwatta 19.6.15
 Some of the companions of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, were shown Laylat al-Qadr in their sleep during the last seven days.
 The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, ‘‘I see that your visions agree about the last seven days, so whoever is searching for it should do so in the last seven days.’’

⁹ Narrated by Aisha
 Mishkat Al-Masabih 2091
 Aisha asked Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) to tell her what prayers to say on Laylat al-Qadr if she knew which night it was, and he told her to say, ‘‘O Allah, Thou art forgiving and lovest forgiveness, so forgive me.’’
 Ahmad, Ibn Majah and Tirmidhi transmitted it, and Tirmidhi declared it to be sound.

717 Fiqh us Sunnah 3:145-b 1b:473 3j:147 RN2
 Ramadan: Laylat Al-Qadr: (3/3) Prayer And Supplication

Islam believes that the Qur’an is itself a miracle, indeed Muhammad’s only miracle. It is the living evidence that Muhammad was a prophet.⁵ Muslims believe that one piece of evidence for the miraculous nature of the Qur’an is that Muhammad was illiterate (Surah Al-A’Raf, 7:157 – ‘the Prophet who can neither read nor write’).

- **Do Muslims still believe that something supernatural happens on Laylat al-Qadr?**

For a start, Islam holds that the demons are chained during Ramadan.⁶ The holy Spirit and the angels descend on that night, to invoke blessings on worshippers.⁷ Muslims believe that they receive visions and dreams about the Night.⁸

- **Does Islam still believe that God forgives sins on Laylat al-Qadr?**

Laylat al-Qadr is an opportune time to seek forgiveness of sins committed up to that point.⁹ Some Muslims translate ‘Laylat al-Qadr’ as ‘the Night of *Decree*’. A person’s eternal destiny may be affected by worship on that night.¹⁰ After all, ‘The Night of Power is better than a thousand Months’, i.e. more than 83 years, a life-time of worship.¹¹

- **What happens *now* on Laylat al-Qadr?**

On this night, Muslims will offer prayers of worship (known as *salat*), and also of petition (known as *du’a*). They stay up all night to remember Allah and read the Qur’an. Pious Muslims who can afford to do so, often engage in retreat or seclusion in the mosque during this period, (known as *I’tikaf*).¹² They do so because it is believed that the angel Gabriel revealed this to Muhammad, who then practised it.¹³

THE DAY OF HIS POWER

Christians have an equivalent to the Night of Power, prophesied in the Old Testament (Tawrah and Zabur). It is ‘The Day of His Power’. This prophecy is in Psalm 110:3, which refers to the heavenly enthronement of the Messiah.

Psalm 110

1. The Lord says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”
2. The Lord will stretch forth Thy strong sceptre from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of Your enemies.”
3. Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power...

This text was quoted by the Apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:

34. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,
“The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand,
35. until I make your enemies your footstool.’
36. Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

• **What happened on Pentecost?**

On the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit (who in the Bible is not the angel Gabriel, but rather the Third Person of the Trinity) descended from Heaven and filled the disciples of Christ with Himself, Acts 2:

1. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
2. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

The commencement of the Divine Inspiration of Allah’s Apostle was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship (Allah alone) continually for many days before wishing to see his family. He used to take with him provisions for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadijah to eat his food again as before.

One day suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira. The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied, ‘I do not know how to read.’ The Prophet (peace be upon him) added, ‘The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, ‘I do not know how to read.’ Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time until I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, ‘I do not know to read (or what shall I read)?’ Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, ‘Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.’ (96:1,2,3).

Then Allah’s Apostle (peace be upon him) returned with the Inspiration and with his heart beating severely. He went to Khadijah bint Khuwaylid and said, ‘Cover me!’ They covered him until his fear was over. After that he told her everything that had happened and said, ‘I fear that something may happen to me.’ Khadijah replied, ‘Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving people afflicted with calamities.’

Khadijah then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad ibn AbdulUzza, who, during the pre-Islamic period became a Christian and used to write in the Hebrew alphabet. He would write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight.

Khadijah said to Waraqah, ‘Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!’ Waraqah asked, ‘O my nephew! What have you seen?’ Allah’s Apostle described that which he had seen. Waraqah said, ‘This is the same one who keeps the secrets (angel Gabriel) whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live until the time when your people will turn you out.’ Allah’s Apostle asked, ‘Will they drive me out?’ Waraqah replied in the affirmative and said, ‘Anyone (man) who came with something similar to that which you have brought was treated with hostility; and if

I remain alive until the day when you will be turned out then I should support you strongly.’ But after a few days Waraqah died and the Divine Inspiration also paused for a while.

Another hadith states the following about the beginning of Qur’anic inspiration:

Narrated by Jabir ibn Abdullah
Sahih Al-Bukhari 6.444

Yahya ibn AbuKathir narrated that I asked AbuSalamah ibn AbdurRahman about the first surah revealed

of the Qur’an. He replied, ‘O you, wrapped-up (i.e. al-Muddaththir).’

I said, ‘They say it was, ‘Read, in the Name of your Lord Who created,’ (i.e. surat al-Alaq, the Clot).’

On that, AbuSalamah said, ‘I asked Jabir ibn Abdullah about that, saying the same as you have said, whereupon he said, ‘I will not tell you, except what Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) had told us.

Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said, ‘I was in seclusion in the cave of Hira’, and after I completed

the limited period of my seclusion, I came down (from the cave) and heard a voice calling me. I looked to my right, but saw nothing. Then I looked up and saw something. So I went to Khadijah (the Prophet’s wife) and told her to wrap me up and pour cold water on me. So they wrapped me up and poured cold water on me. Then: ‘O you, (Muhammad) wrapped-up! Arise and warn,’ (surat al-Muddaththir, 74:1) was revealed.’

- **What happens now at Pentecost?**

Some churches set aside Pentecost (in Britain, often called ‘Whitsunday’) for worship services to specifically remember when the Spirit came as recorded by Acts 2. However, since this *entire Age* is really the Time of Pentecost, it can be said that *whenever* Christians worship their Lord, they know that the Spirit will be present. They praise God for the coming of the Spirit. They also pray for miraculous manifestations of His presence, specifically the salvation of those who do not yet know Jesus as their Lord.

Endnotes

¹ Narrated by Urwah ibn az-Zubayr
Al-Muwatta 19.6.11

The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “Search for Laylat al-Qadr in the last ten days of Ramadan.”

Narrated by Abdullah ibn Unays
Sahih Muslim 2631

Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: I was shown laylat al-Qadr; then I was made to forget it, and saw that I was prostrating in water and clay in the morning of that (night), He (the narrator) said: There was a downpour on the twenty-third night and the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) led us in prayer, and as he went back, there was a trace of water and clay on his forehead and on his nose. He (the narrator) said: Abdullah ibn Unays used to say that it was the twenty-third (night).

Narrated by Ubayy ibn Ka’b
Sahih Muslim 2633

Zirr ibn Hubaysh reported: I thus asked Ubayy ibn Ka’b: Your brother (in faith) Ibn Mas’ud says: He who stands (for the night prayer) throughout the year will find laylat al-Qadr... he knew that it (laylat al-Qadr) was in the month of Ramadan and it was the twenty-seventh night...

² Narrated by Abdullah ibn Mas’ud
Sahih Al-Bukhari 6.380

Ash-Shaybani narrated that I asked Zirr about the statement of Allah:

‘And was at a distance of but two bow-lengths or (even) nearer. So did Allah convey the Inspiration to His slave (Gabriel) and then he (Gabriel) conveyed that (to Muhammad, peace be upon him)’ (53:10)...

³ Narrated by Aisha
Sahih Al-Bukhari 1.3

3. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.

4. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

A major difference with *Laylat al-Qadr* is that at Pentecost, God did not just reveal His *will*, but rather His very *Being*. In Islam, the holy Spirit did not ‘fill’ Muhammad but instead disclosed revelation to him. In Christianity, the Holy Spirit comes and makes His dwelling in the spirit of a human being, transforming his/her character and enabling that person to overcome sin in his/her life.

Furthermore, this revelation of the Spirit was not in **private** (as Muslims believe about Muhammad in Mount Hira) but rather in **public**. The Bible records in Acts 2:

9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians--we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.

The astonished pilgrims in Jerusalem saw and heard the evidence of the coming of the Spirit.

The presence of the Spirit proved that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, and that the Devil had been defeated, John 12:31. One of the signs of the coming of the Spirit is that people in general – and not just Apostles - will experience supernatural ‘dreams’ and ‘visions’, Acts 2:17. We see examples of this in Acts 9:10ff; 10:1ff; 16:9ff; 18:9ff.

- **What is the significance of Pentecost?**

In the Old Testament, Pentecost was the ‘Feast of Weeks’, the closing festival of the Passover when the Children of Israel

celebrated their deliverance by God from slavery in Egypt. Exodus 19:1 indicates that Moses received the Tablets of the Torah on the fiftieth day after the deliverance from Pharaoh. The coming of the Spirit on Pentecost occurred fifty days after the Passover sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross.

The Bible says of the final Tablets given to Moses that they were written with the ‘finger of God’, Exodus 31:18. This is a term used to describe the Spirit (Luke 11:20/Matthew 12:27). The Torah was revealed to enable people to live in God’s will; the Spirit was revealed to enable people to live in God’s *presence*.

Furthermore, the Spirit is the *guarantee* and *evidence* of salvation and **complete** forgiveness of sins available to people of every nation, as seen in Acts 2:

37. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

38 Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.”

- **Was Pentecost miraculous?**

Pentecost was indeed miraculous. The Spirit descended and filled the disciples with Himself. He also gave evidence of this by causing them to speak in other languages, such as Persian, Latin, Coptic, Berber and Arabic. This amazed the crowd of pilgrims who had come from all over the Roman Empire and beyond, who were witnesses of ‘God’s deeds of power’, Acts 2:

3. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. 5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under

heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

7. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11. Cretans and Arabs - in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.”

- **Do Christians still believe that something supernatural happens on Pentecost?**

The New Testament says that the entire period between the First and Second Comings of Christ is the ‘Day of Salvation’ (2 Corinthians 6:2). *Every* day is in this sense ‘the Day of Pentecost’. Miraculous events, and most of all, the saving experience of the reception of the Spirit, can occur at *any* time to anyone from any nation, not just on the specific day of Pentecost. People are spiritually dead and separated from God because of their sin. This supernatural experience sees them receiving forgiveness, being made spiritually alive, and becoming a child of God.

- **Does Christianity still believe that God forgives sins on Pentecost?**

As the entire time until the Second Coming of Christ is the Age of Pentecost, God *still* forgives sins on Pentecost. He forgives them *every day*. Everyone who repents and has faith in Jesus as the Lord and Saviour who died on the Cross for our sins, rose from the dead, and ascended to Paradise to rule at the right hand of God the Father, is forgiven