

Sura 97: Al-Qadr (The Power)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

Verses 1 to 5:

1. *We have indeed revealed it (the Qur'an) in the Night of Power;*
2. *And what will explain to you what the Night of Power is?*
3. *The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.*
4. *In it, descend the angels and the Spirit, by the leave of their Lord, with every command.*
5. *Peace it is; until the rise of dawn.*

This Sura was revealed in Mecca. The talk in this Sura is about the glorious night that was registered by the whole universe as a night of joy, happiness and prayers. This was the night in which the connection was established between the earth and the Higher Host. This was the night in which the revelation of the Qur'an started. This was a major event the like of which the earth has never witnessed before. Its glory, its significance, and its impact on human life are beyond the understanding of humankind.

The verses of the Qur'an that describe the beginning of the revelation of the Qur'an almost show the light of God through His Word. It is known that this is one of the nights of the month of Ramadan. It is the same night that was referred to in Surat al-Dukhan, *"We revealed it on a blessed night, We are ever warning; Therein every wise command is made clear; As a command from Our presence, We are ever sending; Mercy from your Lord. He is the All-Hearing, the Omniscient."* (al-Dukhan: 3-6) It is agreed upon that it is one of the nights of the month of Ramadan, as was mentioned in Surat al-Baqarah, *"Ramadan is the (month) during which the Qur'an was sent down, a guidance to humankind and clear (signs) for the guidance, and the Criterion (between right and wrong)."* (al-Baqarah: 185) Ibn Ishaq narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) started to receive the Divine Revelation in the month of Ramadan.

Some narrations say that it is the night of the twenty-seventh of Ramadan. Others indicate that it is the night of the twenty-first of Ramadan. A third opinion indicates that it is one of the last ten nights of Ramadan. A fourth group is of the opinion that it has not been specified, so it is one of the nights of Ramadan.

Its name is The Night of the Power. The name may mean power, control, and decree. Or it could mean glory and status. Both alternatives are appropriate to describe such a major universal event. It has shaped the life of humankind. It is better than a thousand months. This is not a definite number. It simply means that this night is better than a great many months.

Humanity may ignore the significance of this night, due to its ignorance and bad luck. But the believers are commanded to always remember the significance of this night. The Prophet (PBUH) has been quoted to have said, *"Seek the Night of the Power during the last ten nights of Ramadan."* He also has been quoted to have said, *"God will forgive all previous sins of whoever spent the Night of the Power in prayer."* Islam is not a religion of superficial formalities. The prayer during the Night of the Power must be done on the basis of pure faith and has to be devoted solely to God.

The Islamic project relates the rituals of worship to the belief in the fundamentals of the doctrine. It makes the rituals a way for seeking the understanding of the concepts of the doctrine and transforming these concepts into feelings and behavior. The connection between the Night of the Power and prayer is one of the aspects of the successful Islamic project.