

Preparing for Laylatul Qadr!

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Is there a need to prepare for Laylatul Qadr?

In order to answer this, let us define what the word 'PREPARE' means? Simply, put it means to make ready or fit, to bring into a suitable state, to make one ready for, e.g. when we want to prepare a meal, or go out for an event, we must have a GOAL in mind.

As in what is my end result, the final dish or my final destination where I wish to end up. And as per the subject under discussion i.e. "Preparing for Lailatul Qadr" our **GOAL** is to take full benefit/make full use of the **BOUNTIES & RAHMA** that Allah (swt) bestows opens us in this night of **LAYLATUL QADR**.

It is important that we first understand the significance of **LAYLATUL QADR** in order that we know what sort of 'ingredients' are required for our preparation to reach the Ultimate Goal which is earning the pleasure of Allah (swt)

What is Laylatul Qadr therefore?

You are all aware of its importance so I will just briefly re-run through it. In surah Al-Qadr Allah (swt) clearly states:

"Surely We revealed it (the Holy Qur'an) on the grand night. And what will make you comprehend what the grand night. The grand night is better than a thousand months. The angels and Gabriel descend in it by the permission of their Lord for every affair, Peace! It is till the break of the morning." (97:1-5)

Allah (swt) is inviting all the believers for a Divine feast; the invitation which has been brought by the messengers. Allah (swt) is the host, his most favorite angels are the servants and the believers are the guests. The table is spread with Divine blessings containing all sorts of rewards and favors. Though the eyes cannot see them nor the ears hear them not the human hearts imagine them, yet the bounties are all kept in readiness to be awarded to the guests in accordance to her actions.

Laylatul-Qadr is a blessed night because the Almighty brings down during it **goodness, bliss,** and **forgiveness** for His servants. It is a feast which has come with a message that shows one

the way to achieve happiness in both the worlds. Laylatul Qadr is a feast for the spirit, a feast of worship and prayers.

Ahadith indicate that the fate of every believer for the coming year is decreed on this night. When our Prophet (saw) was asked how man could enjoy the favors and good grace of proximity to, and mercy of, Allah (swt) he quoted Nabi Musa's (as) supplication:

"Oh My God, I seek proximity to You; He (Allah) said: Proximity to Me is for him who stays awake on Laylatul Qadr.

"Oh My God, I am in need of Your Mercy; He said: My Mercy is for him who shows mercy to the poor on Laylatul Qadr.

"Oh My God, I am in need of the passport to cross the bridge; He said: that is for him who give alms on Laylatul Qadr.

"Oh My God, I am in need of the trees in Paradise and their fruits; He said: that is for him who seeks forgiveness on Laylatul Qadr.

"Oh My God, I seek deliverance from fire; He said: that is for him who remembers Allah on Laylatul Qadr.

"Oh My God, I seek Your good pleasure; He said: that is for him who says a two rakat prayer on Laylatul Qadr."

On another occasion Nabi Musa (as) said: "Oh My God, *are You far away that I shout at You, or are You near that I whisper to You?*" He said: "O Musa, *I am sitting together with you!*"

What do we therefore have to remind ourselves about Laylatul Qadr?

We have to remind ourselves about Laylatul Qadr that it is:

- A unique **once in a year** opportunity to do a life times worth of activity.
- Full of long lasting blessings.
- The night of unsurpassed grandeur when the absolute **Grand God** revealed the **Grand Qur'an** through the Grand Wahy - Jibraeel into the heart of the **Grand Holy Prophet (saw)**.

- A once in a year occasion for **influencing our future destiny** - “QADR” - taqdeer.

The Ma'sumeen have explained to us that god in his infinite wisdom had planned the system of the universe in such a way that every persons destiny will be determined on a yearly basis in the angelic spheres through the agency of the Imam of the age. Who is the leader and focus of the whole spiritual world) this gives MANKIND a unique opportunity to influence his own future (gains, loss/health/sickness, richness/poverty/ etc by performing certain acts, e.g. dua salat, sadaqah, jihad, acquiring knowledge, quran recitation etc.

- The night when the whole multitude of angels and the great spirit (ruh) descend on earth, greeting and praying for the believers and conveying messages to the Imam of age.

Do we than still need to PREPARE OURSELVES FOR LAYLATUL QADR after knowing its significance?

Yes, Let us imagine for a moment that we are invited for a special feast by the president of our country, who also tells us in advance that he is going to reward us with magnificent gifts as per the way we present and behave ourselves during the feast - **What would we do ?**

After the initial euphoria, we would leave no stone unturned to present ourselves in the best possible manner. Preparations of what to wear, how to get there, what will I speak with the president, If I have to go through his secretary what will I say to him, what sort of gifts will I take with me, what sort of conversation with I have with him, all this and more will be thought about, rehearsed and re-rehearsed. Correct me if I am wrong!!

All this ‘tension’ in honor of an invitation from the President of a country. Lailatul Qadr is an invitation form the President of all Presidents, The Supreme One. Do we need to make preparations for this night?

Undoubtedly, we must start our preparations *way ahead of time*, after all going by human fitra, there is more than profit that can be got from this feast of Laylatul Qadr unless out of sheer carelessness we end up amongst those negligent and idle ones, who do not achieve anything except tiredness, loss and eternal doom, who will gain nothing except regret and cry out aloud on the day of Reckoning:

"Ah! Woe upon me! In that I neglected (my duty) towards Allah."

What sort of Pre-preparations are needed before the advent of this grand Qadr?

Jibrael was asked; "What has the Almighty Allah done on this night with the wishes of the believers among the nation of Muhammad (pbuh)?" He answered, "The Almighty Allah has looked upon them on this night and forgiven them, all of them, except the following: *"One who is addicted to drinking, One who severs his ties with his kin, and One who is a trouble-maker."*

We have been advised to beseech Allah (swt) during the whole year before the arrival of the Night of Power, to keep us alive for this night:

- To bestow upon us the tawfiq to remain vigilant during this night and pray for blessings and forgiveness.
- To bless us that we are able to do the best of deeds on this night.
- To comprehend fully the importance of this night which is superior to one thousand months.
- To pray that we can become one of the favorites of Allah (swt) and be blessed with His love, learning, nearness, union, pleasure, together with health, happiness, and welfare;
- To yearn and act so that Allah (swt) be so pleased with us in such a manner, that after this night He would never be displeased us again.
- To pray that our Aimma esp. the Imam-ul-Asr be pleased with us intercede on our behalf.

How to Prepare oneself for The Night of Power (Lailatul-Qadr).

(I) Preparing Mentally

- Strive to keep Allah (swt) at the fore of one's mind the whole night long.
- All the Ibadah done should be recited in the state of being completely awake, aware, conscious, and with a live heart. If one feels that one will not be able to concentrate then start reciting from now *"We are from Allah and towards Him is our return."* - **Holy Qur'an (2:156)** for it is considered as a tragedy if one can not in this night receive the divine grace in supplications. *"Their prayers ascend upwards and reaches Allah, their words are accepted, and Allah loves to listen to their prayers the way a mother likes her own child."*

Is not it shameful that the prayers which ascend upwards should be recited from the tip of the tongue, while the heart and soul remain occupied in worldly affairs?

Many a times, one feels that one cannot 'properly' perform a certain ibadah and so decided to forgo it. One should not do listen to this 'waswas' instead, one should perform it & more, for acceptance lies in the Hand of the Mercy of Allah (swt).

(II) Preparing Physically

The other preparations to be done for this night are:

- For worshipping in this night a suitable place, dress, and perfume should be arranged in advance (comfortable dress which does not distract us).
- Paying alms during this night - to the people who really deserve financial support.
- Follow the translation of the duas in order to understand what you are reciting for lutf is only got when one knows what one is reciting.

(III) Preparing Spiritually

- Increase ones eagerness for receiving the promised bounties and blessings;
- Select worships and deeds which are more in harmony with ones mood;
- When one stands for prayer, or any other Ibadah, to briefly spare a moment to think about the wisdom of that action/its meaning etc for e.g. Why am I standing towards Mecca? To realize that when I stand on my two feet, it indicates my hope and fear about the acceptance of my worship;
- Resorting (Tawassul) to Ahlul-Bait [a] - With persistence, supplicating in a polite and soft manner, with words and content arousing their sympathies, should beseech them for bestowing upon us the grace of being vigilant during this night.
- Crying and Shedding Tears: that during these nights ones fear, humility, tears, crying, anguish, and lamentation be increased as much as possible. The Learned Scholar Hajj Mirza Javad Agha Maliki Tabrizi (r.a.) in his book (Suluk-i Arifan) Spiritual Journey of the Mystics tell us that One of the best method is that one should tie ones hands around ones neck; should pour dirt upon ones head; should place ones head against a wall; sometimes one should stand and sometimes one should cry; should imagine oneself at the scene of Judgment Day; and the way sinners are rebuked with harshness, then one should imagine and be scared lest Allah (the Glorious, the Exalted) orders: "*Seize ye him, bind ye him, burn ye him in the blazing fire, and make him march in a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits.*" - **Holy Qur'an (69:30-32).**

Then one should cry: "O' Thou are the most compassionate, and Thou Who are the shelter of unsheltered ones!" "Where is Your vast blessing? Where is Your infinite forgiveness? Where are Your love and benevolence?" Ask for forgiveness of past sins in the most appealing manner with a promise to try never to return to the sins again - a **TAWBA** in every sense of the word Present ones requests before the Almighty with full hope that they will be answered. The Prophet (S.A.W.) when asked what one should invoke Allah during these nights, said: "Ask for your safety (here and in the hereafter)".