

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

All praise and thanks are due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger.

(And I (Allah) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone).) (Adh-Dhariyat 51:56)

(And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for the people of Taqwa.) (Aal `Imran 3: 133)

Allah the Almighty has prepared paradise specifically for pious people. The beginning of the ayah is an encouragement to action; to have taqwa does not mean idleness, it means constant activity.

(O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become pious [people of Taqwa].) (Al-Baqarah 2:133)

`Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) defined taqwa as follows: "Taqwa is to fear the Most Exalted One, work upon His revelation, become content and ascetic and always prepare for the departure from this life."

(Indeed, We sent the Qur'an down during the Night of Decree (Laylat Al-Qadr). And what can make you know what is the Night of Decree? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter. Peace it is until the emergence of dawn.) (Al-Qadr 97: 1-5)

A number of hadiths specifying this night have reached us. Some stress that it is on Ramadan 27, others on 21; a few others say it is one of the last 10 days and still some others do not go beyond saying that it is in Ramadan!

Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "When Allah desires good for someone, He gives him understanding of religion." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said "...The first third of the month of Ramadan is the time for mercy, the second third is for forgiveness, the third is for release from Hellfire..." (Ibn Khuzaymah)

Ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam said: "Seek Laylatul-Qadr (i.e. the Night of Decree) in the last ten days of Ramadan" [Al-Bukhari]

Abu Hurairah, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam said: "Whoever stays up praying during Laylat Al-Qadr (i.e. in prayer) out of faith and in the hope of Allah's reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven." [Al-Bukhari & Muslim]

Imam Ahmad recorded from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), that she said, ""O Messenger of Allah! If I find the Night of Laylat Al-Qadr what should I say?"" He replied, "Say: O Allah! Verily, You are the Oft-Pardoning, You love to pardon, so pardon me." (At-Tirmidhi)

`Ubadah ibn As-Samit (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Whoever gets up at night and says: -- 'La ilaha il-lallah wahdahu la sharika lahu lahu-l-mulk, wa lahu-l-hamd wahuwa 'ala kullishai'in Qadir. Alhamdu lil-lahi wa subhanal-lahi wa la-ilaha il-lal-lah wa-l-lahu akbar wa la hawla Wala Quwata il-la-bil-lah.'

(None has the right to be worshipped but Allah. He is the Only One and has no partners. For Him is the Kingdom and all praises are due to Him. He is Omnipotent. All praises are due to Allah. All glory is due to Allah. And none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and Allah is Great and there is neither Might nor Power Except with Allah). And then says:

-- Allahumma, Ighfir li (O Allah! Forgive me). Or invokes (Allah), he will be responded to and if he performs ablution (and prays), his prayer will be accepted." (Al-Bukhari)

As the last ten nights are now upon us, it is time to re-evaluate how far we have come. More than Two-thirds of the month have already passed and will not return. However, we still have enough time to make a final push in this month, to maximize the benefit that we can attain, and draw closer to Allah the Almighty.