

Background and Meaning

Surah al-Qadr describes the honour of the night on which the Qur'an was sent down. Ibn Kathir connects it with the blessed night mentioned in al-Dukhan 44:3 and with Ramadan, the month named in al-Baqarah 2:185. Its five ayat describe the night's excellence, the descent of the angels and its peace until dawn. His commentary also gathers authentic reports about seeking this night in the last ten nights of Ramadan. The parent should hold its extraordinary virtue together with the worship and gratitude to which that virtue invites us.

Tafsir of the Surah

Ayah 1: The Qur'an sent down. Ibn Kathir records Ibn 'Abbas's explanation that the Qur'an was sent down together to the lowest heaven, then revealed to the Prophet ﷺ in portions over twenty-three years as events occurred. The surah therefore directs attention to Allah's gift of revelation. The night is honoured through the sending down of His Book, which brings guidance to people.

Ayah 2–3: Better than a thousand months. The question emphasises the greatness of Laylat al-Qadr. Ibn Kathir explains the comparison through worship: deeds performed on this night are better than worship over a thousand months that do not contain it. He identifies this as the correct interpretation. The verse encourages a serious response to Allah's generosity, rather than treating the night simply as an interesting date in the calendar.

Ayah 4: The angels and the Spirit descend. Ibn Kathir explains that the angels descend in great numbers because of the night's abundant blessing and mercy. He records the explanation that the Spirit here is Jibril, mentioned separately after the angels to honour him. Their descent is by their Lord's permission. He also records the explanation that the affairs of the year, including lifespans and provision, are decreed on this night.

Ayah 5: Peace until dawn. Ibn Kathir records the explanation of Qatadah and Ibn Zayd that the night is full of good until the coming of dawn. The closing ayah completes the description of its blessing. Its excellence extends through the night; the believer is invited to spend that opportunity in obedience, remembrance and seeking Allah's mercy.



Tafsir of the Surah • Continued

Seeking the night with understanding. Ibn Kathir discusses the different reports about its date and the view that it moves within the last ten nights. He cites the authentic instruction to seek it in the odd nights of that period. His discussion supports sustained worship rather than certainty about one fixed date every year. He also cites the promise of forgiveness for the person who stands in prayer on this night with faith and hope for Allah's reward.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ



Memorised

We sent it down on the Night of Decree.

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ



Memorised

But what will convey to you what the Night of Decree is?

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ



Memorised

The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months.

تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ



Memorised

In it descend the angels and the Spirit, by the leave of their Lord, with every command.

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ



Memorised

Peace it is; until the rise of dawn.

Parent tafsir: adapted from Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, 97:1-5.

Arabic commentary: quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/katheer/sura97-ayal.html

Seeking the night: Sahih al-Bukhari 2017; prayer and forgiveness: 1901, cited by Ibn Kathir.

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