



IN THE NAME OF ALLAH THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

## RAMADAN 2021 – THE SECRETS OF QIYAM AL LAYL (TARAWIH) IN RAMADAN AND LAYLATUL QADR

### INTRODUCTION

Ramadan is fast approaching and inshaAllah we will meet the most beautiful month out of the whole year. It is a month spent by

1. Sacrificing our food and drinks by not eating and drinking, and also to a large extent, our nafs during the day, AND
2. Sacrificing our time after Isha', usually used for resting, but now in Ramadan, we stand in front of Allah voluntarily

This Qiyam al layl prayer, or more popularly known as the “teraweeh” prayer is a voluntary prayer that many Muslims take it to heart and would congregate the mosques. In London, mosques for example the East London Mosque, would see the numbers increasing to full capacity, meaning, about 10,000 would stand voluntarily, hoping to gain Allah’s Mercy. In the last 10 nights, the mosques will be even more crowded, where worshippers hope to meet the Laylatul Qadr – where acts of worship in this night is “better than 1,000 months” in just one night. SubhanAllah. How Merciful is Allah.

The secrets of these 2 glorious big events in Ramadan must be in the achievements and rewards of these nights gained by worshippers, especially those who are striving. These are the people who will inshaAllah be gaining Allah’s Mercy.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ  
حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً<sup>ص</sup> وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“Whoever works righteousness – whether male or female – while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a

reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter).”

[al-Nahl 16:97]

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ  
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

As for those who struggle in Our cause, We will surely guide them along Our Way. And Allah is certainly with the good-doers. 29: 69

وَمَنْ أَرَادَ الْآخِرَةَ وَسَعَىٰ لَهَا سَعْيَهَا وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ  
كَانَ سَعْيُهُمْ مَشْكُورًا

But whoever desires the Hereafter and strives for it accordingly, and is a 'true' believer, it is they whose striving will be appreciated. 17: 19

The above are general rewards from Allah for those who strive to please Him and we make dua that we are among these people.

## MEANING OF QIYAM AL LAYL AND TERAWEEH

Qiyam means 'standing' and 'Qiyam al-Layl' means 'standing at night'. In the Shari'ah term both terms refer to 'the voluntary night prayer, whose time extends after the Isha praye until dawn.'

Commonly the word Taraweeh is used to describe this prayer in Ramadaan, the Muslims used this term from early times. Muhammad Shaqrah says: "The reason for this name is that due to long recitation the people used to rest after every four rak'ah. Eventually this practice became a necessary element of Taraweeh even with short recitations. This led people to think that 'Tarawih' is the correct name revealed to Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him)." [Irsad us- Sari p.75-77]

This Nafl Salat has been interpreted in Ahadith as Qiyam Ramadan. Later on they were named Tarawih. Tarawih is the plural of Tarwihah. Since the Companions of the Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and the successors to the Companions used to make a lengthy Qiyam in them and they would take rest after performing every four Rak'ah. This is how these came to be named Tarawih (Rest prayer). (Four Rak'ah are called Tarwihah).

To stand in prayer during the nights of Ramadhân is referred to as Salât at-Tarâwîh (the Night Prayer). Linguistically, scholars have mentioned its meaning to be linked to the relaxing and enjoyable nature of this prayer, where traditionally the Muslims would pray in congregation with their Imâm for a certain portion of the night to listen to as

much of the Qur'ân as possible, hoping for divine guidance and mercy therein, as Allâh 'azza wa jall says:

“So when the Qur'ân is recited, listen to it carefully, and be silent that you may receive mercy.” (al-A'râf, 204)

Others also mentioned that one can feel at ease (istirâhah) from the fact that insha' Allâh the Tarâwîh prayers will lead to the forgiveness of one's previous sins as narrated in the Sahîh of Imâm al-Bukhâri (rahimahullâh) that the Prophet (sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said, “Whoever stands the night (in prayer) of Ramadhân with Faith in Allâh and hope for the reward from Him, his previous sins will be forgiven.” Therefore it is only obvious that we should naturally take immense care over such a great opportunity.

What follows are a few points related to the praying of the Tarâwîh prayers in order that everyone can enjoy their 'ibâdah based upon knowledge and certainty.

## EXCELLENCE OF PRAYING THE TARAWIH PRAYERS

1. **Tarawih prayer is sunnah**, as stated above, in accordance to scholarly consensus. It is also called Qiyam al layl – and therefore the one who performs this will get the merit of those who perform Qiyam al layl.
  - The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The best prayer after the obligatory prayer is prayer at night.” Narrated by Muslim, 1163.
  - And he said: “You should pray qiyaam al-layl, for it is the custom of the righteous who came before you and it brings you closer to your Lord, and expiates sins and prevents misdeeds.” Narrated by al-Tirmidhi, 3549; classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Irwa' al-Ghaleel, 452.

### 2. **Forgiveness of sins**

Al-Bukhaari (37) and Muslim (759) narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever prays qiyaam in Ramadaan out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven.”

In general, this refers to minor sins only.

3. **If other acts of worship are also done as mentioned in the hadith below, one dies in a state of siddiqoon (truthfulness) and martyr**

It was narrated that 'Amr ibn Murrah al-Juhani said: A man came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) from Qadaa'ah and said to him: "O Messenger of Allaah, what do you think if I bear witness that there is no god except Allaah and that you are His Messenger, and I pray the five daily prayers, and fast the month (of Ramadaan), and pray qiyaam in Ramadaan, and pay zakaah?" The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever dies doing that will be one of the siddeeqs and martyrs." Narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah, 2212.

#### **4. Unlimited rewards**

Al-Haafiz Ibn Rajab said: Note that in the month of Ramadaan the believer engages in jihad al-nafs on two fronts: during the day by fasting and during the night by praying qiyaam. Whoever combines these two types of jihad will be given reward without limit.

#### **5. Rewards for those spending nights in prayer during Laylatul Qadr**

Qadr, of which Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):  
"The Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months"  
[al-Qadr 97:3]

Concerning the reward of qiyaam on this night, it is narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever spends Laylat al-Qadr in prayer out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven." Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1768; Muslim, 1268.

Hence the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to strive hard in worship in the last ten nights as he did not do at other times. Narrated by Muslim, 1175.

Al-Bukhaari (2024) and Muslim (1174) narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: "When the last ten days began, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would tie his lower garment (izaar) tight and stay up at night, and wake his family."

"The last ten days" means the last ten days of Ramadaan.

"tie his lower garment (izaar) tight" - it was said that this is a metaphor for striving hard in worship, or for keeping away from his wives, and it may be that it includes both meanings.

"stay up at night" means staying up and praying and doing other acts of worship.

“and wake his family” means, he would wake them up to pray at night.

Al-Nawawi said:

This hadeeth indicates that it is mustahabb to do more acts of worship during the last ten nights of Ramadaan, and to stay up at night to worship.

## 6. Reward of ending the prayer with the imam

We should be keen to pray qiyaam al-layl in Ramadaan in congregation, and to stay with the imam until he finishes praying. In this way the worshipper will attain the reward for praying the whole night, even if he only spends a short part of the night in prayer. And Allaah is the Owner of great bounty.

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

The scholars are agreed that it is mustahabb to pray Taraaweeh, but they differed as to whether it is better for a person to pray on his own at home or in congregation in the mosque. Al-Shaafa’i and most of his companions, Abu Haneefah, Ahmad and some of the Maaliki and others said that it is better to pray it in congregation, as ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab and the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) did and as the Muslims continued to do.

Al-Tirmidhi (806) narrated that Abu Dharr said: The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever prays qiyaam with the imam until he finishes, will be recorded as having spent the whole night in prayer.”

Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Saheeh al-Tirmidhi.

## HISTORY OF TARAWIH PRAYER

Al-Bukhaari (1129) and Muslim (761) narrated from ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed one night in the mosque, and the people followed him in prayer. Then he prayed the next night, and many people came. Then they gathered on the third or fourth night, and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not come out to them. The next morning he said: “I saw what you did, and nothing kept me from coming out to you except the fact that I feared that it would be made obligatory for you.” And that was in Ramadaan.

Al-Bukhaari (2010) narrated that ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn ‘Abd al-Qaari said: I went out with ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allaah be pleased with him) to the mosque one night in Ramadaan, and the people were scattered, each man praying by himself. Some men would pray and have groups of people behind them following them. ‘Umar said: “I

think that if I unite all these people with one reader, it will be better. Then he resolved to gather them behind Ubayy ibn Ka'b.

al-Haafiz said:

Ibn al-Teen and others said that 'Umar based this decision on the Prophet's approval of those who prayed with him on those nights. Although he disliked that for them, that was based on the fear that it might be made obligatory for them. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) died, there was no longer any fear of that happening, and 'Umar thought, because of the potential division that might arise from people praying separately, and because uniting them behind one reader is more motivating for many people. The majority agreed with 'Umar's decision. End quote from Fath al-Baari.

### **RULING OF TARAWIH PRAYER**

Al-Nawawi said in al-Majmoo', 3/526:

Praying Tarawih is Sunnah according to scholarly consensus. Therefore, it is recommended for Muslims to try and perform it, especially because of the excellence which we will explain below.

However, one must not be too obsessed with the tarawih prayer and treat it as more important than the obligatory prayers. Especially when the the days were long in mid-summer London, when Maghrib was about 930pm and Isha' was at 11pm, some people delayed so much so that they almost missed the Maghrib prayer because of too much food was prepared, then they rushed to the mosque for the terawih prayer that some may missed praying Isha in congregation, especially when they could not find parking spaces. To make matters worse, some were so tired after performing the tarawih prayer, which may end at about 1am, that they missed the Fajr prayer because they overslept. Secondly, if one is a revert to Islam who are not used to praying, or if one has just started to practise Islam, he or she must focus on perfecting the obligatory prayers first inshaAllah. Perhaps in the last 10 nights of Ramadan then he or she would do as many rakaat as he or she can in the mosque for the tarawih prayer.

Thirdly, one should pace oneself during Ramadan inshaAllah. Not everyone has the same strength and energy. If one feels tired in the first few nights of Ramadan after the long hours of fasting, especially in the late spring/summer period, then one should simply rest and conserve energy inshaAllah for the obligatory acts of worship. Conserve the energy inshaAllah so that we have enough strength and energy for the last 10 nights of Ramadan where one should not sleep at night but spend the entire nights doing acts of worship.

### **TARAWIH PRAYER IN CONGREGATION RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL**

The 3 hadiths above explained that it should be done in congregations:

1. The hadith when prophet Muhammad SallAllahu ‘alayhi wa sallam prayed in the first few nights of Ramadan;
2. The hadith when Umar ibn Khattab (RA) gathered the people together to pray under 1 imam
3. The hadith on the reward if one ends tarawih prayer with the imam

It was said to Ahmad ibn Hanbal: Do you prefer a man to pray with the people in Ramadaan or on his own? He said: He should pray with the people. He said: And I prefer that he should pray with the imam and pray Witr with him. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If a man prays qiyaam with the imam until he finishes, it will be recorded as if he spent the rest of the night (in prayer).” Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “He should pray with the people until he prays Witr with them, and he should not leave until the imam leaves. Abu Dawood said: I saw him (Imam Ahmad) – in the month of Ramadaan, praying Witr with his imam, except on one night when I did not attend. Ishaq (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: I said to Ahmad: Is praying qiyaam in Ramadaan in congregation dearer to you or praying on one’s own? He said: I prefer that this prayer should be offered in congregation, so as to revive the Sunnah. And Ishaq said the same. End quote. See al-Mughni, 1/457.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said in Majaalis Shahr Ramadaan, p. 22:

At first the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to pray Taraweeh in congregation in the mosque, then he stopped because he feared that it might be made obligatory upon his ummah...

Then he quoted the two ahaadeeth quoted above. Then he said:

No man should keep away from Taraweeh prayer lest he misses out on the reward for it. And he should not leave until the imam finishes Taraweeh and Witr, so that he may attain the reward of spending the whole night in prayer. End quote.

Al-Albaani said in Qiyaam Ramadaan: Rather it (praying Taraweeh in congregation) is better than praying it alone, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did it himself and explained its virtue.

Rather he did not lead them in praying it in congregation for the rest of the month because he feared that praying at night during Ramadaan might be made obligatory for them, and they would be unable to do that, as it says in the hadeeth of ‘Aa’ishah which is narrated in al-Saheehayn and elsewhere. This concern no longer applied after the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) died and Allaah had completed Islam. Hence the reason for not praying in congregation when offering night prayers in Ramadaan was no longer present, and the previous ruling remained in effect, which is that it is prescribed to offer this prayer in congregation. Hence ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) revived it, as it says in Saheeh al-Bukhaari and elsewhere. End quote.

It says in al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah (27/138):

From the time of ‘Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him), the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Muslims regularly offered Taraweeh prayer in congregation. ‘Umar (may

Allaah be pleased with him) is the one who united the people in offering the prayer behind a single imam.

### **HOW MANY RAKAAT (UNITS)?**

We Muslims must not make this as an annual dispute. If you wish to pray 8 rakaat tarawih, it is good alhamdulillah. If you wish to pray 20 rakaat it is also good alhamdulillah.

There are no fixed number of raka'ât (units) of prayer during the Tarâwîh prayers, and therefore the ruling is open and accommodating of ones needs. So whoever likes to do so can pray twenty raka'ât, or ten, or eight, not including the odd number of raka'ât performed for the Witr prayer. All this is permissible, narrated from the Salaf and the Imâms of the four schools as well as other major scholars in the Islâmic history.

Abdullah Bin Umar (Radi Allahu Anhu) related: A man asked the Prophet (Sallah Allahu Alihi Wa Sallam) about Night Prayers. He replied: " Night prayer are two by two, and when you are afraid that dawn is approaching then pray one Raka'a to make what you have prayed odd" [ Malik's Muwatta: Hadeeth 267]

This hadeeth proves the generality of night prayer as a prayer with no limitation because at the time the Prophet ( Sallah Alahu Alihi Wa Sallam) was asked he had not mention numbers at all. It is established in Usool that delaying a needed information or clarification at time of inquiry is not accepted. So, if the number is needed then it would be mentioned especially noting that the question the man asked is general so he was asking about all information he can get about Night prayer.

If it argued that he has not asked about the number and the question seemed to be in regards the description, then we reply saying: If this is true then the prophet would not have mentioned the Witr issue and only answered how the night prayer should be prayed. In addition, it is noted that it is the Manhaj of the Prophet (Salla Allahu Alihi wa sallam) to answer with additional information if it is needed or considered beneficial. Therefore, if the number was needed he would have mentioned it. that is why we find him mentioning the Witr prayer only as additional information although the man did not ask about it.

There is of course the famous hadith:

The hadeeth of Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd al-Rahmaan, who asked 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her), "How did the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) pray during Ramadaan?" She said: "He did not pray more than eleven rak'ahs in Ramadaan or at other times. He would pray four, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were, then he would pray four, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were, then he would pray three. I said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, will you



sleep before you pray Witr?' He said, 'O 'Aa'ishah, my eyes sleep but my heart does not.'"

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1909; Muslim, 738

They said: This hadeeth indicates that the Messenger of Allaah was consistent in his prayers at night in Ramadaan and at other times.

The scholars refuted this use of the hadeeth as evidence by saying that this is what the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did, but the fact that he did something does not imply that it is obligatory.

Whatever it is, the most important is that the prayer should be performed with khushoo', recited with tartil and inshaAllah with proper understanding of the verses recited.

## **IF ONE COMES LATE TO THE MOSQUE OR JOINS THE CONGREGATION AT HOME LATE**

At certain occasions it is possible you may come to the mosque late and the congregation have already started the Tarâwîh prayers. It is permissible for you to pray your 'Ishâ' prayers behind the Imâm according to many of the 'ulemâ', and this is the most correct opinion insha'Allâh, even with the fact that your intention will be different to the intention of the Imâm leading the congregation. No doubt though, one should not make a habit of this and try to get to the mosque early and in good time to take as much advantage as possible of the blessings available at these honoured times.

## **KHATAM OF QUR'AN AT THE END OF RAMADAN**

Regarding the popular du'â of khatam al-Qur'ân (the completion of the Qur'ân), there are no authentic narrations which make this to be within the prayer, rather it is known that the narrations concerning this from some of the Sahâbah and Imâm Ahmed ibn Hanbal (rahimahullâh) refer to a du'â outside of the prayer. This has been mentioned by many of the contemporary scholars including Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd (hafidhahullâh).

## **THE QUNUT**

The Qunût (the Du'â in the last raka'ah) is permissible in the last unit of the Witr prayer whether in the month of Ramadhân or outside of Ramadhân, and it is permissible to make this du'â before the rukû' or after the rukû' as has been narrated from the Imâms. Also, one does not have to persist in making the qunût all the time especially as many of the Fuqahâ' considered the du'â of Qunût to only be valid during the last half of the month of Ramadhân.

It is appropriate to mention here a few points about this du'â due to the many mistakes people make in it, and what is authentically related about it. <sup>[1]</sup>

### **The Du'â of al-Qunût**

(a) It is totally against the Sunnah to 'sing' this du'â as we find many Imâms doing these days. Others utilise methods such as to vocalize the supplications in a chanting form, or exaggerating in making it rhyme, sometimes using different voices, crying, screaming etc. Many forget that although all the above might sound sincere and emotional, du'â is an act of worship which must be performed like any other act of 'ibâdah i.e. as narrated by the Prophet (sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam) and his blessed companions (radhy Allâhu 'anhum), and many of the previous and contemporary scholars have rebuked such innovations in this du'â as a serious mistake.

(b) Using supplications that have no basis either because they have been narrated via fabricated chains, or more importantly because their meanings contradict the Islâmic belief, is something which must be avoided. Sometimes, we find some Imâms going to immense measures to memorise such strange du'âs and not paying attention to those supplications which have been narrated authentically.

(c) Using the method of sajà'ah (rhyming prose) in the du'â which is to try and make every line rhyme with the previous one by maintaining the same last letter or word throughout is something which is wrong and must be avoided. Many examples are present these days such as:

"Allâhumma-Arhamnâ fawq al-Ardh, warhamnâ tahta al-Ardh, warhamnâ yawm al-Ardh."

"O Allâh, have mercy on us above the Earth, and have mercy upon us underneath the Earth, and have mercy upon us the day the Earth will be taken away."

In all cases, these supplications have been manufactured over hours and hours, instead of relying on that related from the Prophet (sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam). It is important to note that one will find many authentic supplications from the Prophet (sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam) that might rhyme, but this is not the same as intentionally making up ones own du'â. The Prophetic du'â have a clear absence of exaggeration, and much more a natural manner to their style.

(d) Elongating the Qunût causing difficulties for those following behind is something which is wrong and blameworthy, causing many to become very tired, and even cause people to become bored and to 'switch off', leading to people even disliking this beautiful part of the religion, which is obviously an immense danger.

This is why the Prophet (sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said to Mu'âdh (radhy Allâhu 'anhu) – when he elongated the obligatory prayer whilst he was the Imâm – “Are you putting the people to trial O Mu'âdh!?” ,so what then of people who elongate this kind of du'â for over half an hour!

(e) If one does want to increase upon an authentic du'â, he must:

- only use words which are relevant to the same topic and du'â
- the words are to be generally found in the Qur'ân and Sunnah
- that the extra is to come AFTER the du'â narrated by 'Ali (see below) or BEFORE the du'â of 'Umar narrated by Hasan ibn 'Ali (radhy Allâhu 'anil jamî')
- that any extra words are not taken as legislated themselves and used all the time
- that they are not used to elongate the du'â so as to make things difficult on those following the prayer behind you

(f) The authentic narrations for the Qunût are generally quite short, but one can add to them as he sees fit from what is authentically narrated from the Prophet (sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam) or his companions, or indeed use verses of supplication from the Book of Allâh. Care should also be taken to turn these supplications into the plural for it is not permissible to make a du'â for yourself only whilst leading a congregation. Some examples are given below of authentic du'â, firstly that narrated by 'Ali from the Prophet (sallallâhu 'alayhi wa sallam) and secondly the du'â of 'Umar (which have been turned into the plural for congregational use):

“ Allâhummah-Ihdinâ fî man hadayt, wa 'îfinâ fî man 'îfayt, wa tawallanâ fî man tawallayt, wa Bârik lanâ fî mâ 'Aa'tayt, wa qinâ sharra mâ qadayt, fa innaka taqdhî wa lâ yoqdhâ 'alayk, wa inna hu lâ yadhillû man wâlayt, wa lâ ya'izzû man 'îdayt, tabârakta rabbanâ wa ta'âlayt.”

“O Allâh guide us along with those whom You have guided, and pardon us along with those whom You have pardoned, and be our Supporter along with those whom You have supported, and place blessings for us in what You have given us. Protect us from the 'evil' that You have decreed, for verily You decree and none can decree against You. Certainly, whomsoever You support and be an Ally to is never humiliated, and whomsoever takes You as an enemy is never honoured, O our Lord, Blessed and Exalted indeed are You.” [2]

“Allâhumma Innâ Na'udhubika bi Ridhâka min Sakhatik, wa bi Mu'âfâtika min 'Uqûbatik, wa bika mink, Lâ nuhsî thanâ'an 'alayk, anta kamâ athnayta 'alâ nafsik.”

“O Allâh I seek refuge within Your pleasure from Your displeasure, and within Your pardon from Your punishment, and with You from You (i.e. Your anger), We cannot enumerate your praise, You are as You have praised Yourself.” [3]

(g) As for the use of verses of Qur'ân in the du'â, then that is good and recommended. Some excellent examples of that are the following verses:

(Île-'Imrân, 16), (al-Mu'minûn, 109), (Île-'Imrân, 147), (al-Kahf, 10), (al-Hashr, 10), (al-Mumtahinah, 4-5), (Île-'Imrân, 8), (al-Baqarah, 201), and (al-Baqarah, 286).

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1. Taken from the excellent book "Du'â al-Qunût" of the Shaykh al-Allâmah Bakr Abu Zayd (hafidhahullâh)
  2. Hadîth sahîh narrated by all the Imâms of the Sunan on the authority of 'Ali (radhy 'Allâhu 'anhu), and authenticated by al-Albâni in al-Irwâ'.
  3. This is the du'â of 'Umar (radhy Allâhu 'anhu) on the authority of Hasan ibn 'Ali and it is authentically narrated bby al-Bayhaqi.

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### UNDERSTANDING LAYLATUL QADR

Allah is so Merciful that He would allocate certain periods of time as very important with a multitude of rewards. We have the best 10 days of the year being the first 10 days of Dhulhijjah where the deeds that we do are very beloved to Allah in these 10 days.

We have the whole month of Ramadan as a Blessed month of achieve Taqwa (2: 183) and within these one month, the best nights are the last 10 nights. Allah even Revealed one whole surah in the Qur'an dedicated to these amazing nights:

الْقَدْرَ لَيْلَةً فِي أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِنَّا  
الْقَدْرَ لَيْلَةً مَا أَدْرَاكَ وَمَا  
شَهْرٍ أَلْفٍ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ الْقَدْرَ لَيْلَةً  
أَمْرٍ كُلِّ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ بِإِذْنِ فِيهَا وَالرُّوحُ مَلَائِكَةٌ تَنْزَلُ  
الْفَجْرِ مَطْلَعِ حَتَّى هِيَ سَلَامٌ

"Verily, We have sent it (this Qur'an) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree). And what will make you know what the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is? The Night of Al-Qadr

(Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e., worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months, i.e., 83 years and 4 months). Therein descend the angels and the Ruh [Jibril (Gabriel)] by Allah's Permission with all Decrees. (All that night), there is peace (and goodness from Allah to His believing slaves) until the appearance of dawn."

In an authentic hadith:

The companion Anas ibn Malik reported: "Ramadan approached, so the Messenger of God said: 'This month has come to you, and in it there is a night that is better than a thousand months. Whoever is deprived of it is deprived of all goodness, and no one is deprived of its goodness except one who is truly deprived.'" (Ibn Majah 1644)

[Surah Al Qadr 97: 1-5]

On this night, the single most important event in human history unfolded as, after the Glorious Qur'an was preserved in the Protected Tablet, Jibril (AS) descended with the blessed book to reveal it, upon Allâh's command, to His Messenger (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam).

Allah SWT also reminded us in another verse of the Holy Quran:

مُنذِرِينَ كُنَّا إِنَّا مُبَارَكَةٌ لَيْلَةٍ فِي أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِنَّا  
حَكِيمٍ أَمْرٍ كُلُّ يُفْرَقُ فِيهَا  
مُرْسَلِينَ كُنَّا إِنَّا عِنْدَنَا مِّنْ أَمْرًا  
الْعَلِيمُ السَّمِيعُ هُوَ إِنَّهُ رَبُّكَ مِّنْ رَّحْمَةٍ

"We sent it (this Qur'an) down on a blessed night [(i.e., the Night of Al-Qadr, Surah No:97) in the month of Ramadan, the 9th month of the Islamic calendar]. Verily, We are ever warning [mankind that Our Torment will reach those who disbelieve in Our Oneness of Lordship and in Our Oneness of worship].

Therein (that night) is decreed every matter of ordainments (i.e., the matters of deaths, births, provisions, and calamities for the whole (coming) year as decreed by Allah).

As a Command (or this Qur'an or the Decree of every matter) from Us. Verily, We are ever sending (the Messengers).

(As) a Mercy from your Rubb, Verily! He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower."

[Surah Ad Dukhaan 44: 3-6]

These verses of the Quran significantly elevate the status of this special part of Ramadan.

## THE SECRECY OF WHEN EXACTLY IS THIS SPECIAL NIGHT

As Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi (d. 620 H) writes:

*God has concealed this night from the ummah so that they may strive in seeking it and performing worship throughout the month in the hopes of catching it. Similarly, He concealed the hour of special acceptance on Friday so that one would increase in their supplications throughout the day, and He concealed His Greatest Name (ism al-a'dham) amongst His Divine Names and His Pleasure with acts of obedience so that people would strive for them. And He concealed an individual's lifespan and the Hour [of the Day of Judgment] so that humanity would continuously strive in good deeds, being heedful of them.*

Ibn Qudamah, *al-Mughni* (Dar `Alam al-Kutub), vol. 4, p. 453.

But we understand from some hadiths that it is in the last ten nights of Ramadan:

Aishah (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to seclude himself (in the mosque) during the last ten nights of Ramadan. He would say, "*Search for Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree) in the last ten nights of Ramadan.*"

[Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

### In another hadeeth:

`Aishah (r.a.) reported: The Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) used to observe I`tikaf in the last ten days of Ramadan and say, "*Seek Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree) in the odd nights out of the last ten nights of Ramadan.*"

[Related by Al-Bukhari]

We learn from this Hadith that Lailat-ul-Qadr occurs in any of the five odd nights - 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th and 29th - of the last ten nights of Ramadan. Its exact date has not been revealed for the reason that people keep themselves awake for prayer for a larger number of nights. Had its date been fixed, people would have kept awake for prayer only on that night. There is a general belief among the scholars that it is fixed, on the 27th night of Ramadan. But this is not correct. Ahadith do not confirm this view.

### In another hadeeth:

`Aishah (RA) reported: When the last ten nights (of Ramadan) would begin, the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu `alayhi wa sallam) would keep awake at night (for prayer and devotion), awaken his family and prepare himself to be more diligent in worship.

[Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

Lastly,

ʿAishah (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu ʿalayhi wa sallam) used to strive more in worship during Ramadan than he strove in any other time of the year; and he would devote himself more (in the worship of Allah) in the last ten nights of Ramadan than he strove in earlier part of the month. [Related by Muslim]

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NIGHT

Islamic scholars differ regarding the meaning behind the name of *ʿLaylatul-Qadrʿ*, as the word *ʿQadrʿ* can hold a variety of meanings, and each has its own theological significance.

Some scholars defined *ʿQadrʿ* in the context of this holy night as *ʿdestiny/decreeʿ* (qadar). To them, this meant that this was the night in which the destiny of each person was decided. It would be this night in which a person’s sustenance, lifespan, and other critical matters would be sealed for the coming year.

In support of this, ʿAbdullah ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: “It is written in *Umm al-Kitab* (the Heavenly copy of the Qur’an) during *Laylatul-Qadr* what shall come to pass in the following year of good and evil, sustenance, and lifespan. Even the pilgrimage of the pilgrim (shall be decided); it will be said *ʿso-and-so will perform pilgrimageʿ* (on this night).” *Tafsir al-Baghawi* 7/227-228.

Al-Hasan Al-Basri (d. 110 H), Mujahid (d. 104 H) and Qatadah (d. 117 H) – three renowned early Muslim scholars – shared this view and were reported to have said that “all the affairs of lifespan, deeds, creation, and provision are decreed on *Laylatul-Qadr* in the month of Ramadan and will come to pass in the coming year.” Al-Bayhaqi, *Kitab Fada’il Al-Awqat*, 213

Imam Al-Nawawi concluded his discussion on *Laylatul-Qadr* by saying: “It was named *Laylatul-Qadr*, meaning: the night of judgment and discernment (in the affairs of men). This meaning is what is true and popular.” *Al-Majmoo’ Sharh Al-Muhadhab*, 6/447.

Other scholars defined the meaning of *ʿQadrʿ* as *ʿpower,ʿ* indicating the greatness of the honor and might of the night. *Tafsir Al-Baghawi*, 8/48. Similar to this view is the interpretation of *ʿQadrʿ* as *ʿpowerʿ* in that the righteous deeds performed during this night are far more powerful than they would be on any other night.

Ibn ʿUthaymeen said: “A person would attain the reward of the night, even if he has no knowledge of it. This is because the Prophet said *ʿwhoever stands (in prayer) during Laylatul-Qadr, with faith and hope, will be forgiven,ʿ* and the Prophet did not make knowledge of the night a condition of their forgiveness. And had knowledge of the night become a necessary factor, the Prophet would have made this clear.” *Sharh Al-Mumtaʿ*, 6/494

In this view, since knowledge of the night is not a prerequisite to prospering from the night, then it is not required for the worshipper to understand concepts of destiny or

decree in order to achieve the rewards of worshipping on this night. All they need to do is perform acts of worship on that night.

Another meaning of 'Qadr' in the context of *Laylatul-Qadr*, involves the meaning of 'restriction.' This is understood to indicate that the earth becomes restricted as angels descend to the earth on the holy night, occupying the earth. This descent of the angels is referenced in the Qur'an, and since angels are typically associated with concepts such as light, guidance, and blessings, it is a symbol of how majestic *Laylatul-Qadr* is (97: 4) Furthermore, since angels occupy the highest heavens, they are described in the Qur'an as 'close to God'; yet on *Laylatul-Qadr* they are 'seeking permission' from God to descend to earth in recognition of the divine blessings that God places on earth during this night. 4:174 In one narration, the Prophet ﷺ stated: "Truly the angels on this night are as numerous as the pebbles upon the earth." *Musnad Ahmad*, 10734

*Laylatul-Qadr* has also been described as a gift for the Prophet Muhammad's community (*ummah*). In the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik, there is a *hadith* that states: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was shown the lifespans of the people (who had gone) before him, or what Allah willed of that, and it was as if the lives of the people of his community had become too short for them to be able to do as many good actions as others before them had been able to do with their long lives, so Allah gave him *Laylat al-Qadr*, which is better than a thousand months." *Muwatta Malik*, 19:706. On the basis of this narration, some scholars, like Ibn `Abdul-Barr and al-Nawawi, asserted that the virtuous reward of this night was exclusive to Prophet Muhammad's *ummah*, although other scholars like Ibn Kathir and Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani did not consider it exclusive (see Al-Zarqani, Muhammad Abdul-Baqi. *Sharh al-Zarqani `ala Muwatta Malik*, 2003, p.326).

In addition to the aforementioned significance related to Divine decree and providing the Prophet's *ummah* with a unique opportunity for worship, there is also a special connection that *Laylatul-Qadr* has with the Qur'an. In Surah al-Qadr (97:1) and Surah al-Dukhan (44:3), it is mentioned that the Qur'an was revealed on this night. Ibn Abbas has explained this by mentioning on *Laylatul-Qadr* that the Qur'an was revealed in its entirety from the highest heaven to the lowest heaven, and placed in a special chamber called *Bayt al-Izzah* (the House of Honor). From there, it was revealed gradually over the course of twenty three years to the Prophet Muhammad. Mustadrak al-Hakim 3781, *Sunan al-Nasa'i* 11625, *Sunan al-Bayhaqi* 8521. Ibn Taymiyyah explains that this revelation from a written form (in *Lawh al-Mahfudh*) to a written form (in *Bayt al-Izzah*) does not negate the Angel Jibreel hearing the Qur'an directly from Allah and bringing it to the Prophet (*Majmu al-Fatawa* 12/126-7). Thus we have the oral revelation of the Qur'an, and the written revelation of the Qur'an. This was in order to emphasize the lofty status of the revelation and to announce to the inhabitants of the Heavens that this was the final revelation. Badr al-Deen al-Zarkashi, *Burhan fi Ulum al-Qur'an*, vol .1, p. 230. It is also mentioned by other scholars, such as Imam al-Sha'bi (d. 105 H), that the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad began in the month of Ramadan on *Laylatul-Qadr* when Jibreel first descended to visit the Prophet Muhammad. Manna'



al-Qattan, *Mabahith fi `Ulum al-Qur'an*, p. 97. He explains that both of these opinions are in fact correct and compatible.

## THE REWARD FOR THOSE WHO WORSHIP DURING LAYLATUL QADR

Abu Hurairah (RA) reported: The Prophet (Sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam) said, "*Whosoever performs Qiyam during Lailat-ul-Qadr (Night of Decree), with Faith and being hopeful of Allah's reward, will have his former sins forgiven.*" [Related by Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

"Qiyam" here means what keeps one awake to one's capacity and for worship and makes one perform Nawafil, impels one to beg forgiveness from Allah SWT, urges one to praise Him (SWT). Specially, if a person performs `Isha prayer and Fajr prayer in congregation, he will hopefully attain all those distinctions which are mentioned in this Hadith.

## DU'A TO BE RECITED DURING LAYLATUL QADR

There is also a special link between this night and seeking forgiveness from God. A'isha asked the Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah! If I knew which night is Laylatul-Qadr, what should I say during it?" And he instructed her to say:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ كَرِيمٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

**O Allah! You are Most Forgiving, and you love to forgive. So forgive me.** *Jami' al-Tirmidhi, 3513*

The Prophet ﷺ instructed us to call out to Allah using the Divine name *al-Afuww* (The Most Forgiving) on this night, and this has a special connection with Qadar. The linguistic meaning of this Divine Name is explained by noting that the root of *'afuw* (forgiveness) linguistically connotes erasure (*al-mahuw*) and effacement (*al-tams*). *Lisan al-`Arab*, 4/3019. Thus, our prayers to Allah on this night are explicitly connected to a plea for Him to erase the consequences of our misdeeds. The Qur'an states that Allah's *'afuw* protects calamity from being decreed for us as a result of our sins:

***And whatever strikes you of calamity (museebah), it is because of what your hands have earned, although He pardons (ya'fuw) a great deal. (42:30)***

So the decrees on *Laylatul-Qadr* may be descending with calamities that are consequences of our sins, and on this night we have an exclusive opportunity to invoke the forgiveness of *al-Afuww* to erase those sins as well as the resultant decree, and remove them from our fates for the upcoming year.

## WHAT SHOULD WE DO IN THESE LAST 10 NIGHTS OF RAMADAN?

As *Laylatul-Qadr* is certainly the most blessed night of the year, a person who misses it has certainly missed a tremendous amount of good. Many scholars mentioned that what's to be avoided beyond sin is wasting time on that precious night, unnecessary socializing with people, arguing, shopping, etc. One should keep in mind that the night

technically starts at *Maghrib* (sunset), and be heedful of how time is spent from that point onwards. If a believing person is keen to obey his Lord and increase the good deeds in his record, he should strive to spend this night in worship and obedience. If this is facilitated for him, all of his previous sins will be forgiven.

Suratul-Alaq, which was revealed on this blessed night, begins with the command to read the Qur'an, and ends with the command to prostrate and draw close to your Lord. In that is a Divine prescription for how the night is to be spent. Ash-Shafi'i (d. 204 H) said that some of the pious predecessors preferred to spend this night in prayer, some in Quran, some in *dua*, and all are rewarded by Allah. This is especially important to note for women who are on their period and unable to perform *Qiyam* since the rewards of the night are still fully available to them. This also shows the importance of intention in that even if you don't catch the night for some reason out of your control, you will still be fully rewarded for it. While it is best to perform full *i'tikaf* (i.e., seclude yourself in the masjid for the entirety of the 10 days), there are many important things one can do even if one is unable to engage in *i'tikaf*.

Merely praying *Isha* and *Fajr* in congregation on that night is enough to fill its scales. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever attends *Isha* prayer in congregation, then he has the reward as if he had stood half of the night. And whoever prays *Isha* and *Fajr* in congregation, then he has the reward as if he had spend the entire night standing in prayer." *Jami' Tirmidhi*, 221. Similarly in Sahih Muslim, 656a. Moreover, Imam Malik (d. 179 H) narrated that he had heard that Said ibn al-Musayyab (d. 94 H) used to say, "Whoever is present at *Isha* on *Laylatul-Qadr* has taken his portion from it." *Muwatta Malik*, Book 19, Hadith 707.

If one is able to do more than that, the next step involves performing extra voluntary prayers during the night. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "Whoever stands in prayer during *Laylatul-Qadr* with faith and hope in the reward of Allah, all of his previous sins will be forgiven." *Sahih Bukhari*, 1901.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the supplication the Prophet ﷺ advised his wife A'isha to make on that blessed night is a prayer for an all-encompassing forgiveness that involves invoking Allah's love for forgiveness. *Jami' al-Tirmidhi*, 3513. Discussed earlier in the article, p. 9.

Here lies a benefit to the believer in discovering their own love to forgive as they invoke Allah's love of forgiveness. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ stated to his companions: "I came to inform you of the (specific) night of *Laylatul Qadr* but found so-and-so arguing and (in the process of mediating) had the knowledge of the night lifted from me." *Sahih Bukhari*, 49. Since the Prophet's knowledge of the specific night of *Laylatul-Qadr* was taken from him due to internal fighting between two individuals, this serves as a reminder that the grudges between mankind veils them from attaining the pardon and forgiveness of the night. For just as the Prophet was veiled from knowing the night due to the grudges between others, it is by offering forgiveness to others, and overlooking each other's faults, that we discover the forgiveness of Allah during *Laylatul-Qadr*.

And in the equation of success found in the limited efforts of that one night, is the embedded infinite mercy found in the eternal pathway to salvation. The same God who commands you to seek His pardon willingly offers it to you for an effort that can be performed even by the youngest and weakest amongst us. The same God who created you with limited years to do good, gives you days and nights that are equivalent to lifetimes of worship. And the same angel, Jibreel, that He sent to honor the Prophet ﷺ that night is sent to the earth that same night annually to honor his nation.

### **SIGNS OF LAYLATUL QADR**

The Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) described the night as serene, tranquil, and peaceful. The sun at sunrise would appear reddish and without its normal blazing and sharp rays. Ubayy (RA) said : "*On the morning of the night of Qadr the sun would rise without any beams; (it is like) a wash basin until it raises.*" [Related by Muslim]

Abu Hurairah (RA) said : "*We mentioned the night of Qadr to the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and he said: "Which of you remembers when the moon rises and it is like half a bowl."* [Related by Muslim]

Ibn Abbaas (RA) said that the Messenger of Allah (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) said : "*The night of Qadr is a night of generosity and happiness, it is not hot and neither is it cold. The sun comes up in its morning weak, reddish.*" [Related by Tabarane, Ibn Khuzaimah and Bazaar]

The Prophet (SallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam) added that "*the angel of earth on that night of Qadr will be more numerous than all the pebbles of the earth.*"

### **FINAL NOTE ON QADR**

Just as a person awaiting the decree of a judge in the courtroom prays most intensely at the moment when that decree is about to be decided, likewise *Laylatul-Qadr* may signal that final opportunity to change one's fate (*taqdeer*). After that, a person's *taqdeer* in the record of the angels is only changed if it was written from before that it would be changed. The *hadith* scholar, Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani (d. 854 H) notes the difference between the contingent decree (*al-Qada' al-Mu'allaq*) which God has given the angels and the irrevocable decree (*al-Qada' al-Mubram*) which is with God. Al-'Asqalani, al-Hafiz b. Hajar. *Fath al-Bari li sharh sahih al-Bukhari*. (Cairo: Dar al-Rayyan li al-Turath, 1986) vol. 10, p. 430. The recording of one's fate which the angels possess can be subject to change, as the Qur'an states "God erases and confirms what He wills" (13:39) and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said, "Nothing averts fate except supplication (*la yaruddu al-qadar illa al-du'a*)." *Sunan Ibn Majah*, 1:95. However, one's record with God in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawh al-Mahfudh*) is immutable. Thus, a person praying on *Laylatul-Qadr* may result in their records with the angels being altered, before those records seal one's fate for the coming year. Du'a on this night has the greatest power to change decree, hence the night is both the Night of Power and the Night of Decree.

