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THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 97
SURAH AL-QADR

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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CHAPTER

097

SURAH AL-QADR

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Introduction and Summary

The chronology of this Surah has no significance. It is probably Makkan, though some hold that it was revealed in Madinah.

The subject matter is the mystic Night of Power (or Honour), in which revelation comes down to a benighted world---it may be to the wonderful Cosmos of an individual---and transforms the conflict of wrongdoing into Peace and Harmony---through the agency of the angelic host, representing the spiritual powers of the Mercy of Allah.

C.277 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*Blessed indeed is the Night of Power!--
When the Mercy of Allah's Revelation breaks through
The darkness of the human soul!
All the Powers, of the world divine,
Speed on their mystic Message of Mercy,
By Allah's command, and bless every nook
And corner of the heart! All jars
Are stilled in the reign supreme of Peace.
Until this mortal night gives place
To the glorious day of an immoral world!*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ (١)

1. We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the night of Power:

C6217. Cf. 44::3 and n. 4690.

The 23rd, 25th or 27th night of Ramadan, as well as other nights, have been suggested as the Night of Power. See, however, the Introduction to this Surah.

It is best to take this in conjunction with verse 3 below, which says that the Night of Power is better than a thousand Months.

It transcends Time: for it is Allah's Power dispelling the Darkness of Ignorance, by his Revelation, in every kind of affair. (R).

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ (٢)

2. And what will explain to thee what the Night of Power is?

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ (٣)

3. The Night of Power is better than a thousand Months.

C6218. "A thousand" must be taken in an indefinite sense; as denoting a very long period of time.

Cf. notes 3632 and 3634 to 32:4-5, and n. 5678 to 70:4.

This does not refer to our ideas of time, but to "timeless Time".

One moment of enlightenment under Allah's Light is better than thousands of months or years of animal life, and such a moment converts the night of darkness into a period of spiritual glory.

تَنْزَلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (٤)

4. Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand:

C6219. The Spirit: usually understood to be the angel Gabriel. (R).

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ (٥)

5. Peace! This until the rise of Morn!

C6220. When the Night of spiritual darkness is dissipated by the glory of Allah, a wonderful Peace and a sense of Security arise in the soul. And this lasts on until this life closes, and the glorious Day of the new world dawns, when everything will be on a different plane, and the chequered nights and days of this world will be even less than a dream.