105456 - Is The Night of Al-Isra’ Superior to Laylat Al-Qadr?

the question

Which is the more correct scholarly view with regard to specifying when Laylat Al-Qadr is, and is it the best of all nights or not? What do you think of those who say that the night of the Isra’ is superior to Laylat Al-Qadr?

Summary of answer

• Laylat Al-Qadr is a great night. Allah has made it superior to other nights, and He has told us that good deeds during this night are better than good deeds during more than one thousand months.
• The night of the Isra’ is superior for the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and Laylat Al-Qadr is superior for the ummah.
• The Prophet’s gains on the night of the Mi`raj (ascent into heaven) were greater than his gains on Laylat Al-Qadr, and the ummah’s gains on Laylat Al-Qadr are greater than their gains on the night of the Mi`raj.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Virtues of Laylat Al-Qadr

Shaykh Salih Al-Fawzan (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Laylat Al-Qadr is a great night, the greatness of which Allah referred to in His Book, in the following passages (interpretation of the meaning):

{We sent it (this Quran) down on a blessed night. 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.} [Ad-Dukhan 44:3-4]

{Verily, We have sent it (this Quran) 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.} [Al-Qadr 97:1-5]

It is a night which Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has made superior to other nights, and He has told us that good deeds during this night are better than good deeds during one thousand months. This is a great virtue. He also singled it out by sending down the Quran during it, and describing it as a blessed night, on which is decreed what will happen during the coming year. This is an important distinction of this night.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to strive hard during the last ten days of Ramadan in a manner in which he did not do during other times, seeking Laylat Al-Qadr.

It is the best of nights, because what has been reported concerning its virtues has not been reported concerning other nights. So it is the best of nights, because of what it includes of these great distinctions. This is by the mercy of Allah, may He be exalted, and His kindness to this ummah, as He singled it out for this great night.

Is the Night of Al-Isra' superior to Laylat Al-Qadr?

With regard to the question of superiority between it and the night of the Isra' , Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about Laylat Al-Qadr and the night on

which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was taken on the Isra' (night journey) – which of them is superior?

He replied that the night of the Isra' is superior for the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and Laylat Al-Qadr is superior for the ummah. The Prophet's gains on the night of the Mi`raj (ascent into heaven) were greater than his gains on Laylat Al-Qadr, and the ummah's gains on Laylat Al-Qadr are greater than their gains on the night of the Mi`raj; although they gained a great deal on that night, the virtue, honour and high status of that night were only attained by the one who was taken on the night journey (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). This was the response of Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah concerning this matter.

Imam Ibn Al-Qayyim also discussed this topic, and he agreed with his Shaykh that the night of the Isra' was better for the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and Laylat Al-Qadr was better for the ummah.

However we should point out that Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, has prescribed for us on Laylat Al-Qadr that we should devote ourselves to worship and seek to draw closer to Him , in a manner that He has not prescribed in the case of the night of the Isra'.

On the night of the Isra', the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not strive in worship or single it out for Qiyam (prayers at night) and Dhikr ; rather he singled out Laylat Al-Qadr for such things, because of its virtue and status.

Moreover, there is no proof as to which month the night of the Isra' occurred in, or on which night of the month it was. This indicates that there is no interest to be served by knowing or defining that, unlike Laylat Al-Qadr. Allah has told us that it is in Ramadan, because He, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): "The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran." [Al-Baqarah 2:185]

Moreover, He says (interpretation of the meaning): "Verily, We have sent it (this Quran) down in the Night of Al-Qadr (Decree)." [Al-Qadr 97:1]

So this indicates that Laylat Al-Qadr is in the month of Ramadan, even though there is no certainty as to which particular night it is ; however, it is most likely that it is in the last ten nights, and the night of the twenty seventh is the most likely night according to Imam Ahmad and a number of the leading scholars.

The scholars have put a great deal of effort into working out when it is and there are several opinions, but it is definitely during the month of Ramadan, and undoubtedly the one who witnesses Laylat Al-Qadr will be rewarded commensurate with his intention, efforts and the help of Allah.

So Laylat Al-Qadr has this distinction, because it is prescribed for us during this night to strive hard in worship, Du`aa' and Dhikr, and to seek it, unlike the night of the Isra'; we are not instructed to seek the latter or to single it out for any kind of worship.

Can we celebrate Al-Isra` and Al-Mi`raj?

Thus it is clear that these people who celebrate the night of the Isra' and Mi`raj are innovators who are doing something that was not prescribed by Allah or by His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) never celebrated some night during the year, saying that this was the night of the Isra' and Mi`raj, as these followers of myth and innovation do, who changed their religion made-up rituals and occasions of innovation, and they ignore the Sunnah and the established, proven teachings of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

This is what should be pointed out and explained to people: Allah has prescribed for us to strive hard on Laylat Al-Qadr and to seek it, and to draw near to Him by means of it every year. This is unlike the night of the Isra' and Mi`raj, which He has not prescribed for us to seek it or to single it out for anything. Moreover, it is not clear to us in which month or on which night it occurred, unlike Laylat Al-Qadr. The latter is undoubtedly in Ramadan.

And Allah knows best. May Allah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad.”

(Majmu` Fatwa Ash-Shaykh Salih Al-Fawzan, 2/43)

And Allah knows best.