454931 - Alternation of Laylat Al-Qadr

the question

How can Laylat al-Qadr move, when Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {Indeed, We sent it [the Quran] down during the Night of Decree} [Al-Qadr 97:1] and: {Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night. Indeed, We were to warn [mankind]} [Ad-Dukhan 44:3]? These verses indicate that the Quran came down on a specific night, and this night is Laylat al-Qadr, so how can it move? Why do we not know anything definite about precisely which night the Quran came down on, even though it is a significant night?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

I.

It is proven in the text of the Quran that the Quran came down during the month of Ramadan, in the verse in which Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran} [Al-Baqarah 2:185].

And on Laylat al-Qadr is in that month, as Allah, May He be Exalted, says: {Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night. Indeed, We were to warn [mankind]} [Ad-Dukhan 44:3].

And Allah, may He be Exalted, says:

{ Indeed, We sent it [the Quran] down during the Night of Decree.

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 [Jibril] descend therein by permission of their Lord with all decrees [of

blessings].

Peace it is until the emergence of dawn} [Al-Qadr 97:1-5].

The commentator Shaykh Muhammad al-Amin ash-Shinqiti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

In the words {The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran} [Al-Baqarah 2:185], there is no statement whether it came down at night or during the day, but elsewhere, Allah says that it came down during Laylat al-Qadr in Ramadan, in the verses {Indeed, We sent it [the Quran] down during the Night of Decree} [Al-Qadr 97:1] and: { Indeed, We sent it down during a blessed night } [Ad-Dukhan 44:3], because the blessed night is definitely Laylat al-Qadr.

There are two ways to understand what is meant by it being sent down:

1. That it was sent down all at once to the lowest heaven, as was soundly narrated from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him).
2. That what is meant by it being sent down is the start of sending it down, as some of the scholars said.

End quote from *Adwa' al-Bayan*, 1/143.

As for specifying which night is Laylat al-Qadr, that is a matter concerning which the scholars differed. What is indicated by the hadiths is that it is one of the odd-numbered nights among the last ten nights of Ramadan.

Al-Bukhari (2017) and Muslim (1169) narrated from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Seek Laylat al-Qadr in the last ten nights of Ramadan." According to a report narrated by al-Bukhari: "… in the odd-numbered nights among the last ten nights of Ramadan."

Al-Bukhari included this hadith in a chapter entitled: Chapter on seeking Laylat al-Qadr in the odd-numbered nights among the last ten nights of Ramadan.

The view that Laylat al-Qadr moves among the last ten nights Is the view of the majority of

scholars, because this view reconciles the different reports which speak of when it is.

Al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The conclusion we reached, when taking all the hadiths into consideration, and the fact that the way in which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) eventually settled on when seeking it, is that it is in the last ten nights of Ramadan, and that it moves within that time. In this way, we can reconcile the various hadiths which speak of when it is. This is the view of Malik, ash-Shafa`i, ath-Thawri, Ahmad, Is-haq, Abu Thawr and others, according to what Abul-Fadl `Iyad narrated, so you should trust this view and adhere to it.

End quote from *Al-Mufhim*, 3/251.

The view that Laylat al-Qadr moves does not mean that its time moves; rather what is meant is that the characteristics and qualities that are unique to Laylat al-Qadr move between the last ten nights and there is nothing strange in that, because Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, is able to allocate these characteristics and qualities in one year to the night of the twenty-third, for example, and in another year to the night of the twenty-seventh, and so on.

So if we assume that when the Quran was first revealed on Laylat al-Qadr, it came down on the night of the twenty-seventh, then we may say that in that year, Laylat al-Qadr was on the night of the twenty-seventh, and on this night the Quran came down, and thus the virtue of Laylat al-Qadr was bestowed on that night.

The coming down of the Quran does not start every year; for that only happened on one night, which has passed, and it was not something to be repeated. So the Quran does not come down on Laylat al-Qadr of every year; rather in every year there is a night that has the virtue of Laylat al-Qadr, and this virtue may move from one night to another, so its virtue and characteristics may occur on the night of the twenty-seventh, or the twenty-fifth, or the twenty-third, or whenever.

The point is that there is no connection between the coming down of the Quran and when Laylat al-Qadr will be every year, and it is not essential, in order for a certain night to attain that virtue,

that the Quran should come down on that night. That only happened on the first night when it came down, and there are different scholarly opinions as to when that night was, as noted above, then that night passed and will not be repeated, but the virtue of the night remains every year.

II.

With regard to your question, Why do we not know anything definite about precisely which night the Quran came down on, even though it is a significant night? The answer is: we know that it was Laylat al-Qadr, as we see in the verses quoted above, and that it was in the last ten nights of Ramadan, as mentioned in the hadith of `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) and others.

As for identifying which night it is every year, the fact that the religious texts do not speak of that indicates that it is better for us that it should remain unknown.

It was narrated that `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn al-`As said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "There was no Prophet before me but it was his duty to tell his ummah of the best of what he knew was good for them and warn them about the worst of what he knew was bad for them." Narrated by Muslim (1844).

Concealing it is better for us, so that we will strive in worship during all ten nights, seeking the goodness of that night.

If people knew which night it was, they would strive less and many people would not observe i`tikaf (devotional retreat).

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The scholars differed greatly concerning Laylat al-Qadr, and there are forty views regarding it, as we also see with regard to the hour on Friday [when supplications are answered]. Both matters have been hidden so that people will strive to seek them.

End quote from *Fat-h al-Bari*, 4/262.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The correct view is that it (Laylat al-Qadr) moves, so in one year it is on the twenty-first, in another year it is on the twenty-ninth, or on the twenty-fifth, or on the twenty-fourth, and so on, because we cannot reconcile the hadiths that speak of it except on this basis. But the most likely night is the night of the twenty-seventh; however, that is not definite, as some people think and base their actions on that speculation, striving hard on that night and slowing down on other nights.

The wisdom behind its moving is that if it was on a particular night, the lazy would not stand in prayer except on that night, but if it moves and every night could be Laylat al-Qadr, then people will stand in prayer on all ten nights. Part of the wisdom behind that is to test who is serious about seeking it and who is lazy in that regard.

End quote from *Ash-Sharh al-Mumti`*, 6/492.

And Allah knows best.