

The emigration of Muhammed (SAW) Prophet and the Companions to Medina signified the advent of the Islamic Hijri calendar which is assumed to have taken place on 16 July C.E. 622 (Julian calendar). On this date AH 1 started (AH = Anno Hegirae = year of the Hijra). This migration took place following thirteen years of persecution by the disbelievers of Makkah. This event was adopted as the beginning of the Muslim Era in the Caliphate of 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, the second Caliph after the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, each year consists of twelve months, each month being 29 or 30 days in length depending on the position of the moon. As stated in the Qu'ran:

CURRENT MOON

Waning Crescent

7% of Full

Fri 5 Jul, 2013 moon phases

“The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve (in a year) so ordained by Him the day He created the heavens and the earth; of them four are sacred; that is the straight usage. So wrong not yourselves therein and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together. But know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves.” (Al-Tauba 9:36)

It is considered a divine command to use a (Hijra) calendar with 12 (purely) lunar months without intercalation, as evident from the following verses of the Holy Qur'an:

“They ask thee concerning the New Moons, Say: They are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men and for Pilgrimage.” (Al-Baqara 2:189)

ISLAMIC MONTHS

Each Islamic month starts at sunset, when the lunar crescent is visually sighted after a new moon. The lunar year is approximately 354 days long and is therefore, consistently shorter by about 11 days

as compared to a solar year, so the months rotate backward through the seasons and are not fixed to the Gregorian calendar.

Although new moons may be calculated quite precisely, the actual visibility of the crescent is difficult to predict. It depends on factors such as weather, the optical properties of the atmosphere, and the location of the observer. Therefore in some cases it may be difficult to give accurate information in advance about when a new month will start.

1 – Muharram

DEFINITION

The word "Muharram" means "Forbidden." Even before Islam, this month was always known as a sacred month (al ashhur-al-hurum) in which all unlawful acts were forbidden, prominently the shedding of blood. Muharram can also mean "sacred", concerning which it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

"Indeed, the number of months with Allah is twelve [lunar] months in the register of Allah [from] the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these, four are sacred. That is the correct religion [i.e., way], so do not wrong yourselves during them ..." [At-Tawbah 9:36]

Abu Bakr may Allah (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"The year consists of twelve months, of which four are sacred; the three consecutive months of Dhu'l-Qi'dah, Dhu'l-Hijjah and Muharram, and Rajab, which comes between Jumaada and Sha'baan." (Bukhari).

Allah's Prophet Muhammad(SWT) words which translate as:

"...so do not wrong yourselves during them..." Means; do not wrong yourselves during these sacred months, because committing sins during these months is worse than during the other months. It was reported that Ibn 'Abbaas, (RA) said that this phrase initially referred to all the months, then these

four were singled out and made sacred, so that sin in these months is more serious and good deeds bring a greater reward.

Abu Qataadah said concerning this has chosen certain ones of His creation. He has chosen from among the angels messengers and from among mankind messengers. He chose from among speech the remembrance of Him, or dhikr. He chose from among the earth the mosques, from among the months Ramadan and the sacred months, from among the days Friday and from among the nights Laylat al-Qadr, phrase that wrongdoing during the sacred months is more serious and more sinful than wrongdoing at any other time. Wrongdoing at any time is a serious matter, but Allah (SWT) gives more weight to whichever of His commands He will. Allah (SWT) so venerate that which Allah (SWT) has told us to venerate. People of understanding and wisdom venerate the things that Allah (SWT) has told us to venerate. (Summarized from the Tafseer of Ibn Katheer, (RA) Tafseer of Al-Tawbah, aayah 9:36).

VIRTUES

Of the four sacred months, this month has been blessed with great reward and specific virtues. Abu Hurayrah, (RA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

“The best of fasting after Ramadan is fasting during Allah’s (SWT) month of Muharram.” (Muslim)

In another hadith, Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) is reported to have said that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

“The one that keeps a fast in the month of Muharram will receive the reward of thirty fasts for each fast.” (Tabraani)

10th MUHARRAM

The tenth day of this sacred month is known as Aashura and is considered to be one of the most important and blessed days of Allah in the Islamic calendar.

The word "Aashura" is derived from Ashara, which means ten. The observation of this day dates back to Prophet Moosa (AS). In a Hadith related by Ibn Abbas (RA) when the Messenger of Allah (SAW) came to Madina, he found the Jews fasting on the day of Aashura. He inquired why they were doing so. They replied that it was a good day, the day on which Allah delivered Prophet Moosa (AS) and the children of Israel from Pharaoh. As gratitude Moosa (AS) fasted that day. The Holy Prophet (SAW) responded "I have more right to Moosa than you." He fasted the day and commanded the believers to fast. [Bukhari and Muslim]. The idea underlying this event is to stress the affinity amongst the messengers of Allah and to show that religious devotion is a constant flow from one generation to another. The Prophet (SAW) came not to abrogate all the earlier religious practices but to codify and preserve them for all times to come in ideal forms.

In a hadith it is reported by Aisha (RA) that the Holy Prophet (SAW) ordered:

"the observance of the fast of Aashura. However, when the fast of Ramadan became compulsory, then whosoever wished, kept this fast and whosoever desired did not observe this fast." (Bukhari)

Abu Qataada (RA) has related that the Prophet (SAW) has reported to have said:

"It is my thought that by fasting on the 10th of Muharram Allah (SWT) will pardon the sins of the past year". (Tirmidhi)

Ibn Abbas related when Prophet Muhammad (SAW) observed the day of Aashura and commanded his followers to observe it, they asked him "O Messenger of Allah (SAW) this is the day the Jews, and Christians respect and honor." The Prophet (SAW) promised them that "Next year Allah willing, we shall fast the 9th of the month, along with the 10th." By the following Muharram, the Prophet (SAW) had already passed away. It is therefore, recommended that one observes the fast of the 9th or 11th of Muharram together with that of the 10th to safeguard this deed from resemblance with the non-Muslims who fast only on the 10th of the month. To fast only on the day of Aashura is Makrooh. Ibn Abbas (RA) stated:

"When Rasulallah (SAW) observed the fast of the day of Aashura and ordered (his Companions) to fast, they said: 'O Rasulallah! It is a day revered (glorified) by the Jews and Christians.' Thereupon Rasulallah said: "The coming year, if Allah wills (I remain alive), I will for surely fast on the ninth (also)." (Muslim)

The Holy Prophet (SAW) said:

“Observe the fast of Aashura and oppose the Jews. Fast a day before it or a day after.” (Baihaqi)

Although it is sunnah to fast on the day of Aashura and on one further day, performing a sacrifice on the 10th of the month is an innovation.

One should be generous to one's family and dependants and spend more on them than what is normally spent.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) said:

“One who generously spends on his family on the day of Aashura, Allah will increase (his provision) for the whole year.” (Baihaqi)

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Pre- Islamic times

Prophet Adam (AS) was born and entered the Paradise on 10th of Muharram

Prophet Ayyub (AS) was cured from his illness

A way was made in the sea for Bani Israel

Prophet Suleman (AS) was ordained King

The oceans and heavens were created (Tanbihul-Gaafileen)

During Islam

Hadhrat Hussain (RA) was martyred during this month

Shaykhain Tirmizi & Haakim has narrated from Anas (RA) that the following verse "Allah may forgive thee of thy sins that which is past and that which is to come . . ." (Al-Fath 48:2) was revealed on the 10th of Muharram

The Prophet Muhammed (SAW) defeated Bani Muhaarir and Bani Tha'laba (Tribes of Bani Gatfan) in the year 4 AH

2 - Safar

No specific modes of worship or special rules are set by the Shari'ah to observe this month. >

Definition

The word Safar means "whistling of the wind". As most of the months were named according to weather conditions, at the time when this name was assigned it was probably a windy time of the year. However, being a lunar calendar, the months shift about 11 days every year so, the seasons do not necessarily correspond to the name of the month anymore.

Misconception

This time of the year was considered to be cursed as many catastrophes and calamities took place. However this belief has been proven to be false and totally without foundation and is further confirmed by the following hadith as reported by Jaabir (RA):

"I have heard the Prophet (SAW) saying, the descending of illness and evilsuperstition befalling in the month of Safar is untrue."(Muslim)

Performing a sacrifice on the 6th day of this month is an innovation.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. The Battle of Abwaa took place on 12th of Safar in the year 2 AH
2. The Battle of Khaibar took place in the year 7 AH

3. Ali (RA) married the Prophet's (SAW) daughter Fatima (RA) in the latter days of Safar 2 AH

4. Khubaib Ibn Adey (RA) was martyred in Safar in the year 4 AH in Makkah

5. Zaid Ibn Dathina (RA) was martyred in this month in the year 4 AH in Makkah

3 - Rabee' al-Awwal

DEFINITION

This is the first month of spring.

This is the most significant month in Islamic history, marking not only the birth of The Holy Prophet (SAW) but also his passing from this world 63 years later, both events occurring on the 12th day of the month. Had there been room in Islamic teachings for the celebration of birthdays and anniversaries, these events would have undoubtedly been observed. Therefore, celebrations such as Eid Miaad an-Nabi (celebrating the birthday of the Holy Prophet (SAW)) is pure innovation. Rabee' al-Awwal is also the month in which The Holy Prophet (SAW) migrated from Makkah to Madina.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. The Holy Prophet (SAW) was born in this month as mercy for all and departed from this world 63 years later

2. The Holy Prophet (SAW) migrated from Makkah to Madina

3. Battle of Buwaat took place in the year 2 AH

4. Battle of Saf'vaan took place in the year 2 AH
5. Abu Bakr's (RA) daughter, Asma (RA) was born 6 years before Prophecy
6. Ruqayyah (RA) the daughter of the beloved Prophet (SAW) was born 7 years before Prophecy
7. Abu Bakr (RA) was appointed Caliph
8. Umm Kuithum was married in this month to the third Caliph Uthman (RA) in 3 AH
9. Zainab (RA), the wife of the Holy Prophet (SAW) passed away in the year 4 AH
10. Prophet (SAW) passed away in the year 10 AH

4 - Rabee' ath-Thaane / al-Aakhir

DEFINITION

The second month of spring. As with Rabee' al-Awwal, no special rules or customs are associated with this month.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. The Battle of Furu' from Buhraan took place in 3 AH
2. The Battle of Sariyyah in which the Holy Prophet (SAW) did not take part in, instead he consigned one of his Companions, Sariyyah Ali Ibn Abi Talib in the 9th Hijri as the colonel

DEATHS

Khwaja Nizamuddin departed from this life on the 18th of Rabi-ul-Akhir, 725 AH

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilanee departed from this life at the age of 90, on the 11th of Rabi-ul-akhir, 561 AH

5 - Jumaada al-Awwal

DEFINITION This is the first month of summer, and "Jumada" literally means dry. This month has no special rules and no specific customs are practiced during it.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

The Battle "Moota" took place in 8 AH, against infidels in which the Holy Prophet (SAW) did not participate. The battle is named after a famous city in Syria (Moota). Zaid Ibn Haritha (RA) was the first appointed General by the Holy Prophet (SAW)

In the same battle Khalid ibn Walid (4th general of the Battle of Moota) was proclaimed by the Holy Prophet (SAW) as being "one of the swords of Allah"

The Holy Prophet (SAW) married his first beloved wife Khadijah (RA) 15 years prior to Prophecy

DEATHS

Zaid Ibn Haritha (RA), Ja'far Ibn Abi Talib (RA) and Abdullah Ibn Rawaahah met martyrdom in 8 AH

Abdullah Ibn Uthman (RA) passed away

Abdul Muttalib, the grandfather of the Holy Prophet (SAW) passed away 32 years prior to prophecy

6 - Jumaada ath-Thaane

DEFINITION This is the second of the summer months. This month has no special rules and no specific customs are practiced during it.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. Battle of Salaasil took place in 8 AH
2. Abu Salama (RA) died in the year 4 AH

7 - Rajab

DEFINTION Rajab is derived from the word Rajaba meaning "to respect." This is one of the four sacred months in which fighting was forbidden prior to Islam. It is also known as Rajab al Fard where Fard means alone, because this month comes alone, separated from the other three consecutive sacred months.

This month is also deemed to be a prelude to the month of Ramadan, because the month of Ramadan follows it after the intervening month of Sha'baan. Therefore, when the Holy Prophet (SAW) sighted the moon of Rajab, he used to pray to Allah (SWT)

"O Allah, make the month of Rajab and Sha'baan blessed for us and let us reach the month of Ramadan (ie prolong our life upto Ramadan so that we may benefit from its merits and blessings)."

There are several events related to this month which have no religious significance associated with them. No specific ways of worship have been prescribed by the Shari'ah for this month; however some special rituals and practices have been invented which are not supported by reliable resources and are based on unauthentic traditions and are classified as innovation. These include increasing worship throughout the month of Rajab, celebrating the night journey of the Holy Prophet (SAW) to al-Quds, Jerusalem and from there his ascension to the Heavens on the 26th of the month and performing a sacrificial offering on the 27th of Rajab and then standing in voluntary prayer throughout the night.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. The Holy Prophet (SAW) ascended to Heaven on the 27th of Rajab on either Sunday or Monday (Mi'raaj)

2. Bilal Ibn Haritha (RA) brought a congregation of four hundred men named Banu Muzeena to the Holy Prophet (SAW). They all embraced Islam and became followers of the Holy Prophet (SAW) in the year 5 AH

3. The battle of Tabook took place in the year 9 AH. This was the last battle in which the Holy Prophet (SAW) participated

4. The second Oath of Aqabah took place in Rajab, 12 AH

DEATHS

1. Imam Abu Hanifa (RA) passed away on the 15th of Rajab 150 AH

2. Imam Shafi'ee (RA) passed away on the 14th of Rajab 204 AH

3. Imam Muslim (RA) passed away on the 24th of Rajab 261 AH

4. Imam Nawawee (RA) passed away on the 14th of Rajab 677 AH

8 - Sha'baan

DEFINITION The word "sha'baan" is derived from the word "shu'ba", which means branch and itself means consecutively escalating or undisturbed increase. The Arabs used to branch out during this month to look for water.

The Arrival of the Sha'baan moon brings with it numerous blessings. Just as the initiation of rainfall begins with "pitter patter" such blessings reach us in the same accord and fashion. These blessings progressively escalate throughout the month so that by the middle of the month they have reached a considerable amount, reaching their peak by the end of Ramadan.

Just as a farmer prepares for a fruitful harvest by harrowing his acreage so that the soil may readily retain water; in contrast our souls are geared by the presence of such blessings in Sha'baan effectively preparing us for a fruitful and completely advantageous Ramadan. The Holy Prophet (SAW) has said,

"Sha'baan is my month and Ramadan the month of Allah Ta'aalaa." [Daylami]

The month of Sha'baan is one of the meritorious months in the Islamic calendar and it is reported in an authentic hadith that the Holy Prophet (SAW) used to fast most of this month. Although these fasts are not obligatory, Sha'baan is the month immediately preceding the month of Ramadan, therefore some preparatory measures are suggested by the Holy Prophet (SAW) through his sunnah and his practices.

The blessed companion Anas (RA) reported that the Holy Prophet was asked

"Which fast is the most meritorious after the fasts of Ramadan" he replied "Fasts of Sha'baan in honour of Ramadan"

The blessed companion Usama ibn Zaid (RA) reported that he asked the Holy Prophet (SAW)

"O Messenger of Allah (SAW), I have seen you fasting in the month of Sha'baan so frequently that I have never seen you fasting in any other month" he replied "That (Sha'baan) is a month between Rajab and Ramadan which is neglected by many people. And it is a month in which an account of the deeds (of human beings) is presented before the Lord of the universe. So I wish that my deeds be presented at time when I am in a state of fasting"

Ummul Mu'mineen 'Aishah said

"The Holy Prophet (SAW) used to fast in the whole of Sha'baan." I said to him "Messenger of Allah (SAW), is the month of Sha'baan your most favourite month to fast?" He said "In this month Allah (SWT) prescribes the list of the persons dying this year. Therefore, I like that my death come to me when I am in a state of fasting."

In another tradition she said

“The Holy Prophet (SAW) would sometimes begin to fast continuously until we thought he would not stop fasting, and sometimes he used to stop fasting until we thought he would never fast. I never saw the Messenger of Allah (SAW) fasting a complete month, except the month of Ramadan, and I have never seen him fasting in a month more frequently than he did in Sha’baan.”

In another report she said

“I never saw the Messenger of Allah (SAW) fasting in a month so profusely as he did in the month of Sha’baan. He used to fast in that month leaving only a few days, rather, he used to fast almost the whole of the month.”

Ummul-Mu’mineen Umm Salmah said

“I never saw the Messenger of Allah (SAW) fasting for two months continuously except in the months of Sha’baan and Ramadan.”

These ahadith indicate that fasting in the month of Sha’baan, though not obligatory, is so meritorious, that the Holy Prophet (SAW) did not like to miss them. It should be kept in mind that the fasts of this month are for those persons only who are capable of keeping them without causing deficiency to the obligatory Ramadan fasts. The Holy Prophet (SAW) has also forbidden Muslims from fasting one or two days prior to the commencement of Ramadan. Abu Hurairah reported the Holy Prophet (SAW) said,

“Do not fast after the first half of the month of Sha’baan has gone.”

According to another report, the Prophet (SAW) said,

“Do not precede the month of Ramadan with one or two fasts.”

In essence, the Holy Prophet (SAW) himself used to fast most of the month of Sha'baan, because he had no apprehension of weakness or weariness before the month of Ramadan. As for others, he ordered them not to fast after the 15th of the month for the feat that they would lose their strength and freshness before Ramadan started and as a result would not be able to welcome the month with enthusiasm.

The notion of fasting on the 15th day of this month with is referred to as "shabee baraat," and standing in voluntary prayer during the night, is an innovation which has no religious significance associated with it.

A significant event that occurred during this month was the change in the direction of salat. Bukhar reported that Al-Bara said the Prophet prayed facing Bait-ul-Maqdis in Jerusalem for sixteen or seventeen months but he wished that his Qiblah would be the Ka'ba. Allah (SWT) revealed the following Qu'ranic verses

"Verily! We have seen the turning of your (Muhammad's (SAW)) face towards the heaven. Surely, We shall turn you to a Qiblah (prayer direction) that shall please you, so turn your face in the direction of Al-Masjid- al-Harâm (at Makkah). And wheresoever you people are, turn your faces (in prayer) in that direction. Certainly, the people who were given the Scriptures (i.e. Jews and the Christians) know well that, that (you're turning towards the direction of the Ka'bah at Makkah in prayers) is the truth from their Lord. And Allah (SWT) is not unaware of what they do." (Al-Baqarah 2:144)

The Holy Prophet then offered 'Asr prayers (in his Mosque facing Ka'ba at Makkah) and some people prayed with him. A man from among those who had prayed with him, went out and passed by some people offering prayer in another mosque, and they were in the state of bowing. He said, "I, (swearing by Allah (SWT),) testify that I have prayed with the Prophet (SAW) facing Makkah." Hearing that, they turned their faces to the Ka'ba while were still bowing. Some men had died before the Qiblah was changed towards the Ka'ba. They had been killed and we did not know what to say about them (i.e. whether their prayers towards Jerusalem were accepted or not). So Allah (SAW) revealed

"And Allah would never make your faith (i.e. prayer) to be lost (i.e. your prayers offered (towards Jerusalem). Truly Allah is Full of Pity, Most Merciful towards mankind." (Al-Baqarah 2:143)

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. "Qibla" the direction to be adopted within salaah, was reverted back to the "Ka'aba" in Makkah (after being converted to Baitul Muqaddas in Jerusalem for a short period of time). This took place two years after Hijri on the 15th of Sha'baan
2. Fasting in the blessed month of Ramadan was made compulsory in the year 2 AH on the 25th of Sha'baan
3. Hafsa (RA) was joined in matrimony with the Prophet (SAW) in 3 AH
4. Hafsa (RA) took leave from this world in 45 AH
5. Hussain (RA), the grandson of the Prophet's (SAW) was born, four years after Hijri on the 5th of Sha'baan
6. The Battle of Banu Mustaliq took place in Sha'baan during which, the "Aayah of Tayammum" (purifying with sand before salaah) was revealed, in the year 5 AH
7. The daughter of the beloved Prophet (SAW) Umme Kulthum (RA) took leave from this world, in the 9 AH

9 - Ramadan

DEFINITION The word "Ramadan" is derived from "ramadha" which literally means "intense heat". There are a number of possible reasons for such a name including

When the Islamic months were enforced the month of fasting coincided with the summer months of intense heat

The second reason which has been mentioned is that due to fasting the temperature within the stomach increases, again the element of heat is a factor behind the actual naming of this month

It has also been said that "RAMADHAA" is one of the names of Allah (SWT). If that is the case then the month has acquired the name due to the fact that Allah (SWT) burns away accumulated sins and eliminates them from the list of unlawful deeds. Once again the burning sins cannonades "HEAT". However, it should be acknowledged that this reasoning is not wholly reliable

The month of Ramadan is a season of divine blessings, a month of purification and it is meant for annual renovation of inner-spiritual qualities. It is a golden opportunity for every Muslim to strengthen their iman, purify the heart and soul and remove the effects of sins. During this blessed month fasting is obligatory on all able-bodied Muslims and it is a time to maximize the acts of worship, minimize all mundane activities and refrain from all forms of sin. It is also recommended that one performs Umrah once on any one day of the month as this is a sunnah of the Holy Prophet (SAW).

Allah said in the Qur'an in Surah Al-Baqarah

"Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong)." (Al-Baqarah 2:185)

Abu Huraira related that the Prophet (SAW) said

"If anyone omits his fast even for one day in Ramadan without a concession or without being ill, then if he were to fast for the rest of his life he could not make up for it." [Bukhari]

Abu Huraira related that the Prophet (SAW) said that Allah (SWT) the Majestic and Exalted said

"Every deed of man will receive ten to 700 times reward, except Sawm (fasting), for it is for Me and I shall reward it (as I like). There are two occasions of joy for one who fasts: one when he breaks the fast and the other when he will meet his Lord." [Muslim]

Abu Huraira related that the Prophet (SAW) said

“Many people who fast get nothing from their fast except hunger and thirst, and many people who pray at night get nothing from it except wakefulness” [Darimi]

The month of Ramadan contains the most blessed month of the year, since it contains Laylatul-Qadr, the night when Allah (SWT) chose to reveal the Holy Qur’an.

“We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power. And what will explain to thee what the night of power is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months. Therein descends the angels and the Ruh (Jibrail) by Allah’s permission with all Decrees. There is peace until appearance of dawn” (Al- Qadr 97:1-3)

Worship performed in this night brings more reward than the worship performed in one thousand months. Allah also says about this powerful night in Surah Dukhan

“Ha. Mim. By the book that makes things clear. We sent it down on a blessed night (the Night of Al-Qadr) in the month of Ramadan. For We (ever) wish to warn (against evil). In that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom, by command, from Our Presence. For We (ever) send (revelations), as a mercy from Thy Lord for He hears and knows (all things).” (Surah Dukhan 44:1-6)

Salmaan (RA) reported that on the last day of Sha'baan the Messenger of Allah (SAW) addressed them and said

"Oh people, there comes before you now a great month, a most blessed month in which lies a night greater in virtue than one thousand months; (LAYLATUL-QADR). It is a month in which each day should be observed by fasting, this has been made obligatory by the Almighty Allah."

Abu Huraira related that the Prophet (SAW) said

“Whoever fasts during Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven. Whoever prays during the nights in Ramadan with faith and seeking his reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven. And he who passes Lailat al-Qadr in prayer with faith and seeking his reward from Allah will have his past sins forgiven.” [Bukhari, Muslim]

Aisha (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said "I asked the Messenger Of Allah (SAW) if he knew which night was the Night of Power and what prayer I should say during that night? He said to me say "O Allah! You are forgiving and you love forgiveness, so you too forgive me.

Based on the saying of the Prophet (SAW), this incredible night falls in the last ten nights of Ramadan,

"Search for the Night of Al-Qadr in the last ten nights of Ramadan." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

And it falls in one of the odd nights more likely than on the even nights, based on the Prophet's (SAW) saying

"Search for the Night of Al-Qadr in the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan." [Al-Bukhari]

And it is closer to the last seven nights, based on the hadith of Ibn 'Umar (RA) that

"Some men from the Companions of Allah's Messenger (SAW) saw the Night of Al-Qadr in a dream during the last seven nights (of Ramadan). So the Prophet (SAW) said: 'I see that all of your dreams agree that it (the Night of Al-Qadr) is in the last seven nights. So whoever wants to search for it, then let him search for it in the last seven nights.'" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]

And it is also based on the hadith in Muslim from Ibn 'Umar (RA) that the Prophet (SAW) said

"Look for it in the last ten nights. But if one of you becomes weak or is unable, then do not let the remaining (last) seven nights overcome him."

Amongst the odd nights in the last seven nights, it is closest to the twenty-seventh night due to the hadith of Ubay Bin Ka'ab (RA) who said

“By Allah, I know which night it is. It is on the night that Allah's Messenger (SAW) commanded us to perform the Night Prayer. It is on the twenty-seventh night.” [Muslim]

The night of Al-Qadr is not specified to one fixed night throughout all the years. Rather, it constantly changes. So one year it could occur on the 27th night for example and on another year it could occur on the 25th night, according to Allah's Will and Wisdom. What directs us to this is the Prophet's (SAW) saying

"Look for it (i.e. the Night of Al-Qadr) when there remain nine nights, when there remains seven nights, or when there remains five nights (i.e. 21st, 23rd and 25th respectively without mention of the 27th)."

Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajr said in Fath-ul-Bari "the most strongest opinion is that it is on an odd night in the last ten nights and that it constantly changes."

Allah (SWT) has hidden the knowledge of its occurrence from His servants out of mercy for them so that they can increase their actions in the search for it during these honorable nights, by praying, making dhikr, reciting the Qur'an and supplicating so they grow and increase in the nearness to Allah (SWT) and His reward. Allah (SWT) also kept it hidden from them as a test for them to distinguish who amongst them struggles and makes an effort to find it and who is lazy and negligent. This is since whoever constantly strives for something, he will exert himself in his search for it and trouble himself in finding it and achieving it.

The signs of the Night of Al-Qadr include

1. The sun rises early in the morning without rays.
2. Rain may fall either during the night or during the day of that night.
3. During night the sky will be lightly foggy.
4. The sky will be slightly lighted without reflections and without rays.

Allah (SWT) discloses the time of the occurrence of the Night of Al-Qadr to some of His servants through signs and signals, which one is able to see, Just as the Prophet (SAW) saw its sign that he would be prostrating in mud on its following morning. So it rained on that night and he prayed the (following) morning (Fajr) prayer in mud [Shaikh Muhammad Ibn Saalih al-'Uthaimin in his book Majaalis].

The Night of Power is a very important occasion in Islam. Everyone is asked to live it and to enjoy it. This Night is a night of Mercy, a night of Blessing, a night of Peace and a night of Guidance. It is a night of Unification between the finite world of ours and the Infinite Universe of the Unseen. Anyone who is interested in attaining the Mercy of Allah will strive very hard to look for the Night of Power. Anyone who is interested in receiving the blessings of Allah on the Blessed Night will work very hard to enjoy the Night of Power. Anyone who is interested in attaining peace of mind, peace of body and peace in society, he has to look for this Night and to live it.

Another unique form of worship for this month is that of Itikaaf in which a person gives up all his activities, abandons his attachment, association and routines and in so doing separate oneself from the normal routine of worldly activities and sit in exclusion devoting his heart and soul to Allah (SWT).

Observing itikaaf in Ramadan is established in the hadith of Abu Hurairah (RA) as reported by Al-Bukhari and Ibn Khuzaimah in their Saheeh collections

“Allah's Messenger (SAW) would make 'Itikaaf for ten days in every Ramadan. But when it was the year in which he died, he made 'Itikaaf for twenty days.”

The practice of congregating in the mosques on the 17th of the month of Ramadan at night to recite Surah Yaaseen and celebrating the night on the 27th of the month in anticipation of Laylatul-Qadr, is an innovation which has no religious significance associated with it.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Hasan (RA), the grandson Holy Prophet (SAW) was born on the 15th of Ramadan, three years after Hijri

The Holy Qur'an was revealed on the 27th night of Ramadan from the "Lauhe Mahfooz" (the 7th heaven) to the 1st heaven

The first battle in Islamic History, the Battle of Badr, took place on the 12th of Ramadan in the year 2 AH

Victory of Makkah took place on the 18th of Ramadan in the year 8 AH

Sawdah (RA) married the Holy Prophet (SAW) in year 10 AH

Zainab Bint Khuzaima's (RA) married the Holy Prophet (SAW) in the year 3 AH

DEATHS

Ruqayyah (RA), the Holy Prophet's (SAW) daughter, passed away at the age of 23 in the year 2 AH when the Prophet (SAW) was at "Battle of Badr"

The wife of the Holy prophet (SAW) Khadijah (RA), departed from this world on the 11th of Ramadan in the year 10 AH

Fatimah (RA) took leave from the world on Tuesday the 3rd of Ramadan in the year 11 AH at the age of 29 (6 months after the death of the Holy Prophet (SAW))

The Holy Prophet's (SAW) uncle, Abbas (RA), passed away on Friday the 12th of Ramadan in the year 32 AH at the age of 88

Hadrat Ali (RA), the Prophet's (SAW) son-in-law departed from this world on Friday the 27th of Ramadan, age 57 in the year 40 AH

Saffiyah (RA) took leave from this world in the year 50 AH, at the age of 60

Aa'ishah (RA) was 65 years old when she departed from this world, in the year 58 AH

10 - Shawwaal

DEFINITION The word "Shawwal" means uplift or breakage possible due to the fact that in pre-Islamic times the Arabs believed any marriage taking place in Shawwal would always turn out to be unsuccessful.

Shawwaal is the first of the three months of Hajj, and is also known as Ashhur al-Hajj (month of Hajj). Although the major acts of Hajj are performed in the first ten days of Zul-Hijjah, the period from the 1st of Shawwaal up to the 10th of Zul-Hijjah is held to be the time of the Hajj since it is permissible to perform some of the acts of the pilgrimage during it including tawaaf-ul-qudum followed by Sa'i, and Umrah, which if performed, can be affiliated to Hajj making it Hajj of Tamattu.

The first day of Shawwaal is marked by the festival of Eid-UI-Fitr, a day when all sins are forgiven as a reward for fasting and prayers in the month of Ramadan. It is mandatory for the all Muslims, if they are able, to pay sadaqa-ul-fitr to the poor so they too may enjoy the day with others and it is

sunaah to pay this prior to offering the 2 rakats of Eid prayers. The salat is obligatory on every male Muslim and can be performed any time between ishraq and zawal.

Nafi` reported on the authority of Ibn `Umar that the Prophet (SAW) would order that zakat al-fitr be distributed among the poor and would say,

“Spare them (i.e., the poor) begging on this day (the day of Eid).” [Ahmad]

Al-Bukhari reported that Ibn `Umar said,

"The Prophet (SAW) made zakat al-fitr obligatory" and Ibn `Umar said in the end of this hadith, "People used to give zakat al-fitr (even) a day or two before the `Eid."

This indicates that there was unanimity on the permissibility of paying zakat al-fitr one or two days before the day of Eid. Besides, paying it one or two days earlier than its due time does not contradict its aim, i.e., satisfying the need of the poor on the day of Eid, since this zakah or part thereof remains with the poor until the day of Eid.

THE SIX FASTS OF SHAWWAAL

It is sunnah to fast for six days in Shawwaal, as narrated in the following hadith by Abu Ayyub Ansaru (RA) that the Holy Prophet (SAW) has said,

“If one throughout his life keeps the fasts of Ramadan and keeps six consecutive fasts in Shawwaal it will be as though he has kept a whole life time of fasts, and if one fast for six consecutive days in Shawwaal it will be as though he has fasted all year round.” [Muslim]

This can be explained in the following manner, the one who brings a single pious deed will be rewarded for ten, the fasts of Ramadan are, therefore, equal to fasting for ten months while the six

fasts of Shawwaal are equal to fasting a further two months, giving a total of twelve months or one year.

The practice of offering a sacrifice on the 15th day of this month is an innovation which has no religious significance associated with it.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Aa'ishah (RA) was born in Shawwaal, 4 years after Prophethood and 9 years before Hijri

Aa'ishah (RA) married the Holy Prophet (SAW) in Shawwaal, 10 years after Prophethood and 3 years before Hijri

The fight between Banu Qaynaqaa took place between the battle of Badr and Uhud, in Shawwaal, 2 AH

The battle of Uhud also took place in Shawwaal, 3 AH

Hussain (RA), the Holy Prophet's (SAW) grandson (son of Fatima (RA)) was born in the month of Shawwaal, 4 AH

The Holy Prophet (SAW) married Umme Salamah (RA) in Shawwaal, 4AH

Aa'ishah (RA) mother passed away in year 5 AH

The Holy Prophet's (SAW) uncle Abu Talib, departed from this world in the middle of Shawwaal in the year 5 AH

9. Imam Bukhari (RA) was born on a Friday of Shawwaal in the year 194 AH

11 - Dhul-Qi'dah

DEFINITION Dhul-Qi'dah is taken from the word "qa'ada" which means to sit. During its time, people used to stop their business activities and sit and prepare for the Pilgrimage.

As well as being the first of the four sanctified months, Dhul-Qa'dah is also one of the months of Hajj (see Shawwal). Despite the significance of this month, no specific acts of worship are prescribed for it.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

1. The Battle of 'Khandaq (trench) or Ahzab' took place in the year 5 AH
2. The Truce of Hudaubiyah in the year 6 AH
3. 'Bay'at-e-Rizwaan' (The oath of allegiance named Rizwaan) in the year 6 AH
4. The Holy Prophet (SAW) and his Companions returned to Makkah for Umrah in the year 7 AH

12 - Dhul-Hijjah

DEFINITION The word Dhul-Hijjah means the month of pilgrimage and this is the last of the sacred months in which fighting was forbidden.

The first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are the most virtuous days in this month, with Hajj, the fifth pillar of Islam being performed in this sacred month. Abu Haraira (RA) reported from the Holy Prophet (SAW)

“Amongst all days there are none better to engage in sole worship of Allah than in the ten days of Zul-Hijjah, To observe a fast on any of these days is equivalent to fasting throughout the year, to actively engage in prayer and worship throughout any of these nights holds such rewarding values leveling with the "night of power (Laylatul-Qadr).” [Tirmidh]

It has been stated in the Holy Qur'an,

“By the dawn; By the ten nights (ie. the first ten days of the month of dhul-Hijjah), and by the even and the odd (of all the creations of Allah) and by night when it departs. There is indeed in them (the

above oaths) sufficient proofs for men of understanding (and that they should avoid all kinds of sins and disbelief).” (Al-Fajr 89:1-5)

The 9th of Dhul-Hijjah is the day of Arafat, when pilgrims stand on the mountain asking for sincere forgiveness for their sins, as an indication of how man will be gathered on the day of reckoning. Fasting on this day, by Muslims who are not performing the pilgrimage, brings with it great virtues, Muslim narrated that Fasting on the day of Arafat expiates the [minor] sins of two years: a past one and a coming one. And fasting on the day of Aashura expiates the sins of the past year.

Abu Qataadah (RA) reported in a part narration from the Holy Prophet (SAW) concerning the fast observed on this day,

“I have full confidence in Allah for the one who observes a fast on the day of Arafat that his previous year's sins and the proceeding year's sins are forgiven.” [Muslim]

Abu Dawud narrated that one of the wives of the Prophet (SAW) said Allah’s Messenger (SAW) used to fast the (first) nine days of Dhul-Hijjah, the day of Aashura, and three days of each month.

Eid-ul-Adha is celebrated on the 10th of the month of Dhu-Hijjah and continues till the 13th day. This celebration is observed to commemorate the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) when he was asked to sacrifice his own son Prophet Ishma’il (AS). Ibrahim showed his readiness and Allah (SWT) was very pleased with him, and a lamb was sacrificed in place of his son on Allah’s (SWT) command. The Holy Qur’an gives the following account of Prophet Ibrahim’s (AS) act of sacrifice,

“(Ibrahim prayed:) My Lord, grant me a doer of good deeds. So We gave him the good news of a forbearing son. But when he became of age to work with him, he said: O my son, I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you; so consider what is your view. He said: O my father, do as you are commanded; if Allah pleases you will find me patient. So when they had both submitted and he had thrown him down upon his forehead, and We called out to him saying, O Abraham, you have indeed fulfilled the vision. Thus do We reward the doers of good. Surely this is a manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.” (As-Saffat 37:100–107)

Muslims offer Eid salat (2 rakats) in congregation, this is obligatory on every male Muslim and can be preformed any time between ishraq and zawal. Animals are then sacrificed to seek the pleasure

of Allah and demonstrate complete submission and proof of complete obedience to Allah. The meat is shared amongst poor, relatives, neighbors and friends.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

The Prophet (SAW) performed the farewell Hajj and gave the historic sermon known as the "Farewell Sermon"

Egypt was conquered by the army sent by Umar (RA)

Uthmaan (RA) was appointed the third Caliph

"Bay'ate-Aqabah"

Fatimah (RA) married the fourth Caliph Ali (RA)

DEATHS

Umar (RA) met martyrdom on the 27th of Dhul-Hijjah in the year 26 AH

Uthmaan (RA) was martyred on the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah in the year 35 AH

Dates of important Islamic events

1427AH

1428 AH

1429 AH

1430 AH

Aashura

10th Muharram

02/09/06

29/01/07

19/01/08

07/01/09

1st day of Ramadan

Eve after 24th Sha'ban

24/09/06

13/09/07

02/09/08

22/08/09

Night of Power

Eve after 26th Ramadan

19/10/06

08/10/07

27/09/08

16/09/09

Eid-al-Fitr

1st Shawwaal

24/10/06

13/10/07

01/10/08

21/09/09

Yaum-al Arafat

9th Dhul-Hijjah

30/12/06

19/12/07

07/12/09

26/11/09

Eid-al-Adha

10th Dhul-Hijjah

31/12/06

20/12/07

08/12/08

28/11/09

References