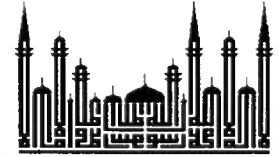


بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Perspectives



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Editorial

The peace agreement for the Balkans was signed by the presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia in Paris on December 14. Although the agreement would nominally preserve Bosnia's sovereignty under a greatly weakened Central authority, the plan would effectively partition the country between two entities : The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (51%) and the Republika Sprska (RS) (49%). Other major elements of the agreement include the deployment of NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR), of which 20,000 are Americans; and the training of the Bosnian Army. Several questions have been raised about various aspects of the agreement, particularly, the U.S. role.

Little attention was given to the moral issues, including the rights of displaced persons and refugees to return to their homes, the future safety and security of the Bosnian Muslims, which bore the brunt of the four - year war. The following comments can be made, in the light of the Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), concerning the security of the Bosnian Muslims and the sanctity of human life :

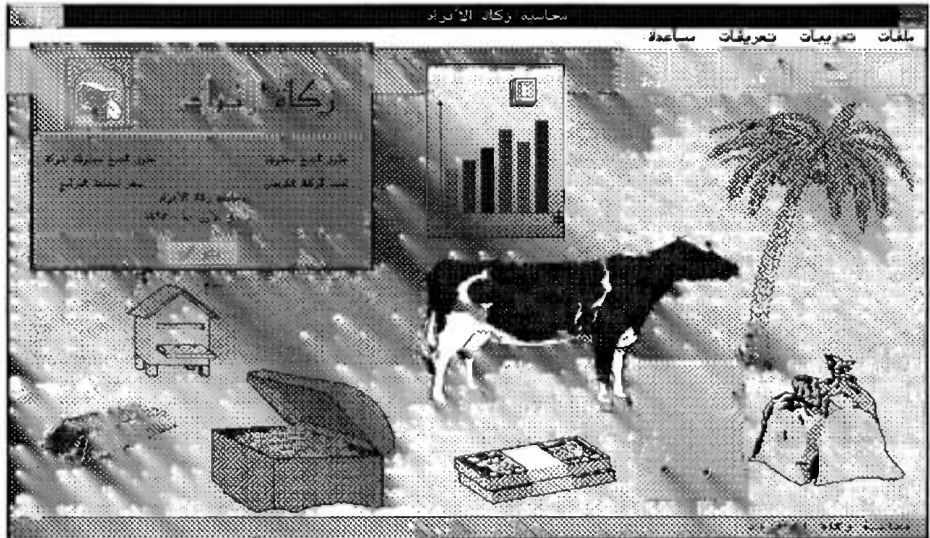
■ The command of Allah to the Muslims is very explicit : to build and maintain a strong military power to protect the safety and security of the Muslims; and to provide a deterrent against attacking and Killing them.

وَاعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ
وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُزْهِبُونَ بِهِ
عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَ عَدُوَّكُمْ وَءَاخِرِينَ مِنْ
دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْصَمُهُمْ
(سورة الأنفال - من آية ٦٠)

see *Editorial* / page 5

New Software for Calculating the Zakah for Individuals and Corporations

With the Grace of Allah, two programs for calculating the *zakah*, on IBM PCs, have just been released by *Sakhr Computer company in Cairo, Egypt*. One of the programs calculates the *zakah* for individuals, and the other for corporations (see the two figures below). The programs are in Arabic. They provide detailed definitions, information, and charts on *zakah*, according to the *Shari'ah* and *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) . The information include: holdings subject to *zakah* (e.g. gold and silver, bank notes and bonds, real estate, trade, plants, fruits, and animals); and recipients of *zakah*. The programs have help menus, answers to frequently asked questions, and tests. They are distributed in the U.S. by *Digitek International Inc., 7631 Leesburg Pike, Suite B, Falls Church, VA 22043-2520, Tel (703) 883-0134, Fax (703) 883-0137*. □



sexual relations (with the spouse) and avoid quarrelling, and if somebody should fight or quarrel with him/her, he/she should say: I am fasting. By Him in whose hands my soul is, the unpleasant smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better with Allah than the smell of musk.

في الجنة ثمانية أبواب - فيها باب يسمى الريان ، لا يدخله إلا الصائمون .

There are eight gates for paradise, one of which is called Ar-Rayyan, those who observe fast will enter through it, and none except them will enter through it.

الصيام والقرآن يشفعان للعبد يوم القيامة ، يقول الصيام : أي رب أنى منعتني الطعام والشهوات بالنهار فشفعني فيه ، يقول القرآن : رب منعتني النوم بالليل فشفعني فيه فيشفعان .

Fasting and the Qur'an will intercede for the person on the day of judgment. Fasting will say : O my Lord, I have kept this person away from food and

passions during the day, so accept my intercession for him/her. The Qur'an will say : O my Lord, I have kept this person away from sleep by night, so accept my intercession for him/her, then their intercession will be accepted.

Significance and Opportunities Provided in Ramadan

■ Allah (SWT) honored the month of Ramadan by sending down the Qur'an in it (Qur'an 2:185). In this month there is one night - the night of the Power, which is the most virtuous night of the year (see the article on the night of the power, page 6).

■ Other Divine messages were also sent down in Ramadan, as is mentioned in the following saying of the Prophet (PBUH):

The suhuf (scriptures) of Ibrahim were sent down on the first night of Ramadan, Torah was sent down after six nights passed in Ramadan, Injil after thirteen nights passed in Ramadan, Zaboor (the Psalms) after eighteen nights passed in Ramadan,

and the Qur'an after 24 nights passed in Ramadan.

■ The significance of the month of Ramadan is best illustrated by the following saying of the Prophet (PBUH):

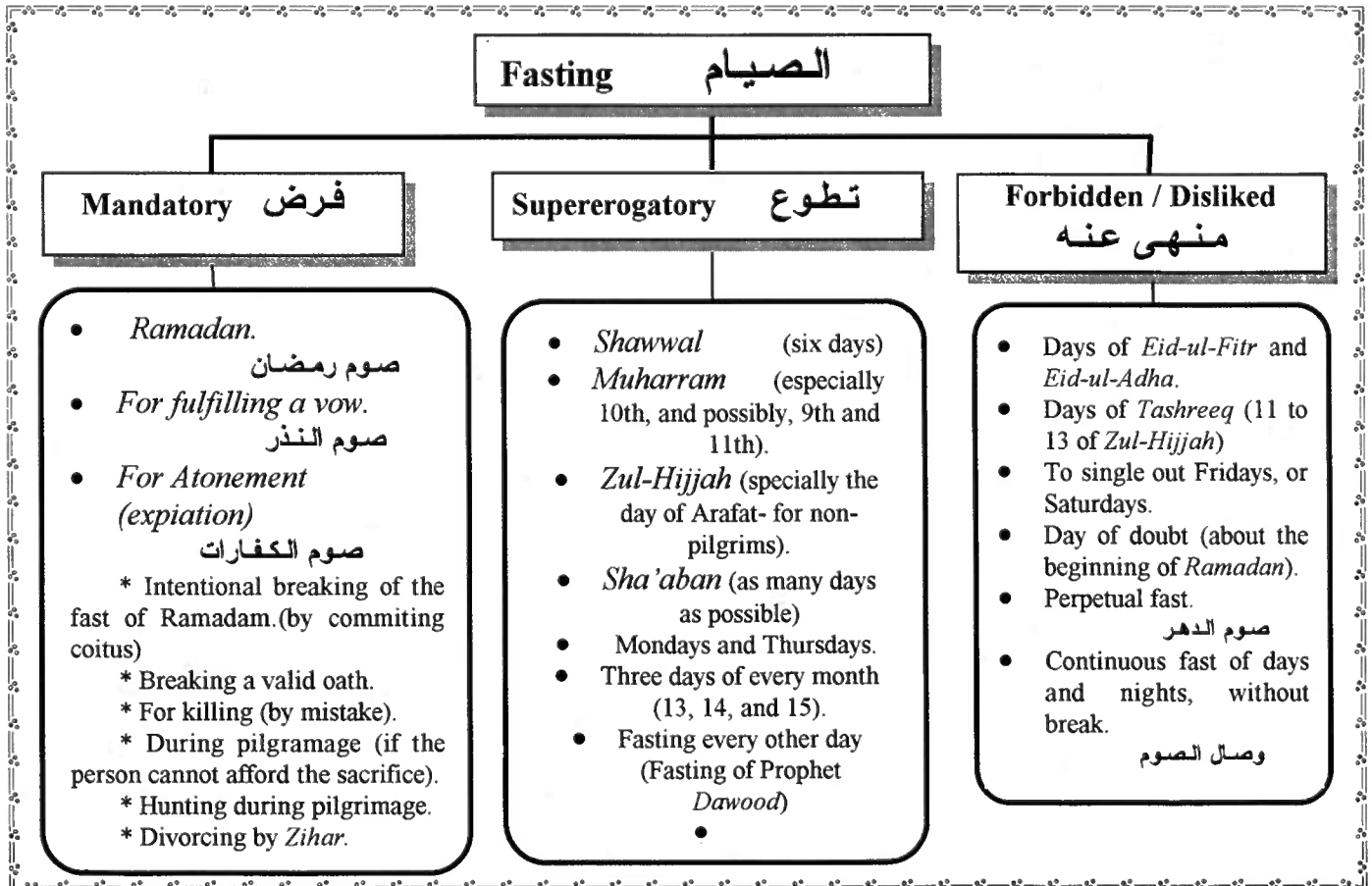
رمضان شهر مبارك تفتح فيه أبواب الجنة ، وتغلق فيه أبواب السعير ، وتصعد فيه الشياطين ، وينادي مناد كل ليلة : يا باغي الخير هلم ، ويا باغي الشر أقصر .

Ramadan is a blessed month, in it the gates of heaven are opened, the gates of hell fire are locked, and the devils are chained.

■ A number of opportunities are provided to us during Ramadan to wipe out our sins. The opportunities are described in the following three sayings of the Prophet (PBUH):

من صام رمضان إيماناً واحتساباً ، غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه .

Whoever observes the fast during the month of Ramadan, believing in Allah and seeking His rewards, will have



his/her past sins forgiven.

من قام رمضان إيماناً واحتساباً ، غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه .

Whoever establishes prayers during the nights of Ramadan (taraweeh prayers), believing in Allah and seeking His rewards, will have his/her past sins forgiven.

من قام ليلة القدر إيماناً واحتساباً ، غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه .

Whoever spends the night of the power in devotion and worship, believing in Allah and seeking His rewards, will have his/her past sins forgiven.

Levels of Fasting

Imam Ghazali in his book of *Ihya*

'Ulum Al-Din identified three levels of fasting:

Fasting of the general public, which involves disengaging oneself from the lowly and animal-like activities, i.e., abstention from satisfying the desires of the stomach and that of sex.

Fasting of the select few (virtuous persons), which involves fasting of the human senses and organs, like the eyes, ears, tongue, hands, and feet, along with the stomach. That is, to withdraw them from forbidden things and trivia, and direct each one of them to their special state of worship (recitation of Qur'an, prayers, Islamic studies, *tasbeeh*, and other virtuous acts).

Specifically, this level of fast includes the following:

- Lowering the gaze, and

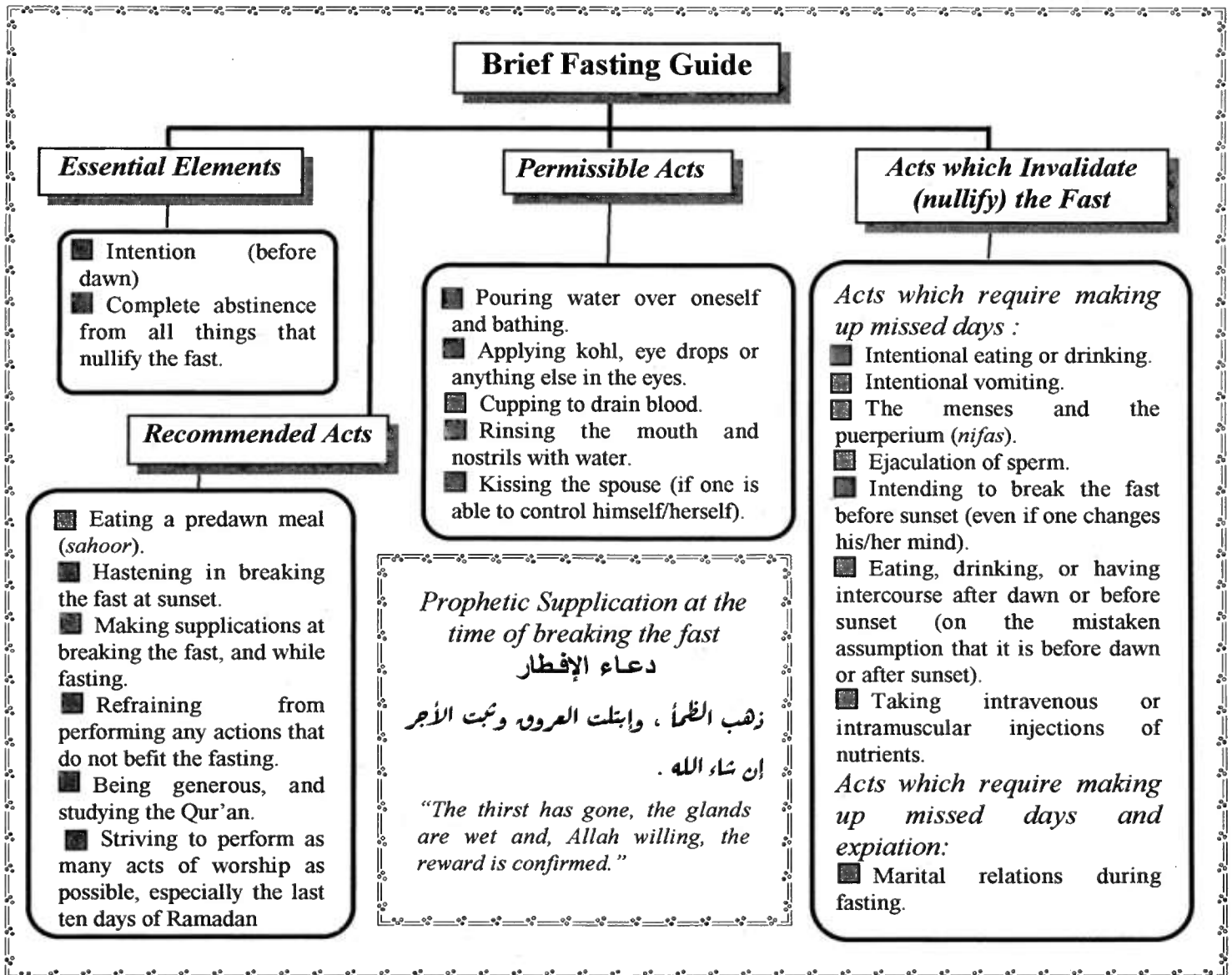
refraining from looking at anything blameworthy and disapproved.

- Banning the tongue from raving, lying, backbiting, tail-bearing, obscenity, abusive language, wrangling, and hypocrisy.

- Closing the ears to every reprehensible thing, because everything which is unlawful to utter is also unlawful to hear.

- Constraining the rest of the senses - restraining the hand from reaching evil, curbing the feet from pursuing wickedness, and avoiding questionable foods at the break of fast.

Fasting of the elite among the select few, which involves fasting of the heart from evil thoughts, worldly worries, and from everything that distract from the remembrance of Allah (SWT). Such a fast is broken by



thinking of anything other than Allah (SWT), and the last day, as well as by being concerned about worldly affairs.

A brief fasting guide including the essential elements, recommended and permissible acts, and acts which invalidate the fast is given on page 4.

Zakat-ul-Fitr

The prophet (PBUH) enjoined the payment of *zakat-ul-fitr* by every Muslim, for himself, and for all the members of the household whom he is supporting. The required amount of *Zakat-ul-fitr* is one *sa'* (approximately three kilograms, or 6.6 pounds) of wheat, barley, raisins, dry cottage cheese, rice, corn, or similar items considered as basic foods. This amount is to be paid for every member of the household. *Zakat-ul-fitr* is due at the end of *Ramadan* and should be paid before *Eid-ul-Fitr* prayers.

Benefits of Fasting

The benefits of fasting are too numerous to enumerate herein. However, the main function of fasting is mentioned in Qur'an 2:183: *that you may become conscious of the presence of Allah*

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

■ Fasting awakens the conscience of the individual. It establishes Allah's presence in his/her life, and make the Muslim pure from within, as other aspects of *Shari'ah* make him/her pure from without. By such purity, the Muslim responds to what is true and good, and shuns what is false and evil.

■ Fasting teaches a creative sense of hope, devotion, patience, moderation, willpower, unselfishness, compassion towards the poor and needy and discipline to bear hardships. It inculcates the spirit of social belonging, unity and brotherhood/sisterhood.

■ Fasting is a multipurpose training program aimed at self-education, self-evaluation, self-control, self-regulation, and self-improvement.

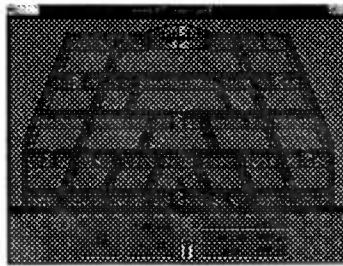
I pray to Almighty Allah to shower us all with the blessings of the month of *Ramadan*, to help us in perfecting our fast, and to grant us the full rewards for it. Ameen

Islamic Software - Educational and Games

Two programs for the IBM PC are listed herein. The first program is entitled *Al-Mufeed*. It teaches the rules and principles of *Tajweed*. The program requires 4MB of RAM, and is available, in either Arabic or English, from *Manar Technologies Inc., P.O. Box 15951, Panama City, FL 32404, Tel./Fax (904) 769-1117*.



The second is entitled *Test Your Knowledge*. It is an Arabic program which provides basic information about Islam, in the form of questions and answers. The information is based on a game of passing through gates and cracks. The program is developed by *Sakhr Computer Company in Cairo, Egypt* and is distributed in the U.S. by *Digitek International Inc.* (address listed on page 1).



Continued from page 1

Editorial

"Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies, of Allah and your enemies, and others besides, whom you may not know; but whom Allah does know." (Qur'an 8:60)

■ Allah (SWT) wants the Muslims to be the protectors of justice, security, and peace in the world. They are not

allowed to use their military assets for aggression against others. More than that, when they are fighting an enemy and winning, and their enemy calls for peace, they are obligated to cease the hostilities and negotiate peace with their enemy.

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلْمِ فَاجْنَحْ لَهَا
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ .
(سورة الأنفال - من آية ٦١)

"But if they incline to peace, incline you also to it, and (put your) trust in Allah." (Qur'an 8:61)

■ The liberation of Mecca on the 20th of *Ramadan*, the year eight after *Hijra*, provides an example of how Muslims build, deploy and use their military assets. The Muslims in *Medina*, led by the Prophet (PBUH), made a treaty with the unbelievers of Mecca (*Treaty of Hdaybiyah*), but the unbelievers abrogated the treaty. The Prophet (PBUH) made an elaborate plan to show the Muslim strength to the unbelievers of Mecca. He divided the army into four groups, and commanded them all not to engage in any fighting, or shed any blood, except in cases of extreme emergency. The Islamic principle of sanctity of human life was never absent from the mind, or the plan of the Prophet (PBUH).

■ The Muslim armies entered Mecca with almost no opposition. The Prophet (PBUH) went to the *Ka'aba* with his companions, and destroyed the 366 idols there. Despite the harm, injury, and persecution inflicted on the Muslims by the unbelievers, the Prophet (PBUH) chose to forgive them, and to grant a general amnesty to all the Meccans.

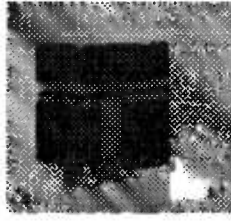
■ Whenever we think that we possess the power over our enemy, we have to remember that all power belongs to Allah (SWT), and therefore, we should rise above hatred and above revenge, and ascend to the heights of nobility required from us as Muslims.

We pray to Almighty Allah to make us realize our duty of building a strong force to protect Islam and Muslims; and to use this force in accordance with the Divine and prophetic commands for maintaining peace, justice, and security in the world. Ameen

The Night of the Power

ليلة

القدر



The night of the power is the most virtuous night of the year. The two most frequently asked questions are: which night is it?, and what are the supplications to be said in that night? . This article provides an answer to these questions , and gives a brief description of the night of the power.

In the verses cited at the beginning of the article, Allah (SWT) refers to the night of the power as a blessed night, a night of testing, and a night during which destinies are decided. It is a night of value, position and rank. All these meanings are relevant to that great universal event of the revelation of the Qur'an and the assigning of the message to the Prophet (PBUH). There can be two meaning to sending down the Qur'an in the night of the power:

First, that in this night the entire Qur'an was entrusted to the bearers (angels) of revelation, and then the angel *Jibreel* continued to reveal its verses and *Surahs*, from time to time according to the plan of Allah (SWT), to the Prophet(PBUH) during the 23 year period. This meaning has been given by *Ibn Abbas*, among others.

Second, that the revelation of the Qur'an began in the night of the power. Both meanings imply that the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet (PBUH) began in this very night, with the revelation of the first five verses of *Surah Al-Alaq* (Qur'an 96:1-5).

The night of power is unparalleled in the history of human beings for its splendor and the significance it has in the life of human beings as a whole. Its greatness is far beyond human realization. The Qur'anic statements which relate this great event radiate with Allah's clear and shining light. There is also the light of the angels, and the spirit moving between the earth and

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ، فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ
أَمْراً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ، رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ
(سورة الدخان - آية ٣ - ٦)

"We sent it down during a blessed night.:For We wish to warn (against evil). In that (night) is made distinct every affair of wisdom. By command, from our presence. For We send (revelations). As a mercy from your Lord.:For He hears and knows (all things)."
(Qur'an 44:3-6)

the highest society. In addition, there is also the light of dawn, which *Surah 97* represents as perfectly harmonious with the light of the Qur'an and the angels as well as with the spirit of peace.

The night is better than a thousand months (eighty-three years and four months). The number here denotes a very large number. Many thousand months, and many thousands years have passed without leaving behind a fraction of the changes and results brought about in that blessed and happy night.

■ As to the question : which night is it?, there are different views on the subject. However, a great majority of Muslim scholars hold the opinion that it is one of the odd nights of the last ten nights of Ramadan, and among them some scholars think it is the night of the 27th of Ramadan. Since there are Prophetic traditions stating that it is the night of the twenty-first, twenty-third, twenty-fifth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-ninth, some Muslim scholars hold the view that it moves from Ramadan to Ramadan (within the odd nights of the last ten days). Among the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH) pertaining to the night of Power, the following two can be quoted:

التمسوا ليلة القدر في العشر الأواخر من

رمضان في وتر ، فإن قد رأيتموها فسيتمها .

Seek the night of Power in one of the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan. I was shown the night but forgot which one it is.

ليلة القدر ليلة بلجة ، لا هارة ولا باردة

ولا سحاب فيها ولا مطر ، ولا ريح ،

ولا يرمى فيها بجم ، ومن علامة يومها

تطلع الشمس لا شعاع لها .

The night of Power is a pleasant night, it is neither hot nor cold with no clouds, rain, or wind. No star will be burned in it. The sun in the morning rises without rays.

Some Muslims, out of ignorance, negligence, and misfortune, may overlook the value and importance of the night of Power. When one ignores all that, he/she loses the happiest and most beautiful sign of grace which Allah bestowed on him/her. One loses the real happiness and peace gifted to him/her by Islam, namely, the peace of conscience, family, and society. Whatever one gains of material goods cannot be adequate compensation for its loss.

As believers, we are commanded not to forget, or neglect, the night of Power. The Prophet (PBUH) has taught us an easy and enjoyable way to commemorate that night, so that our souls may always be in close communion with it, and with the universal event which took place in it. He urged us to spend this night of each year in devotion and worship (for example, recitation of Qur'an; *Nafl* prayers; remembrance of Allah; pondering and contemplating into the universe, the creation of heavens and earth; and giving charity to others).

■ As to the supplication , the Prophet (PBUH) recommended the following

اللهم إنك عفو تحب العفو فأعف عني .

O Allah, You are forgiving and You love forgiveness, so forgive me.

We pray to Almighty Allah to give us the strength, and the guidance to observe the night of the Power, and to firmly establish His *deen* in our minds, hearts, and souls. Ameen

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Abbreviated (Luminous) Letters of the Qur'an الحروف المقطعة في القرآن

One of the miracles of the Qur'an is the letters which are prefixed to certain *Surahs*. These letters are referred to as abbreviated, shining or luminous letters, and are prefixed to twenty nine *Surahs* of the Qur'an. Three of these *Surahs* start with one letter; nine start with two letters; thirteen start with three letters; two start with four letters; and two start with five letters. The order of these *Surahs* in the Qur'an and their names are given in the figure below. The following information is provided about abbreviated letters :

- The total number of abbreviated letters is 14. The fourteen letters are

ا ح ر س ص ط ع ق ك ل م ن ه ي

- The fourteen letters are contained in the five Arabic words

نص حكيم قاطع له سر

- Each abbreviated letter is pronounced separately, for example, الم at the beginning of Surah (*Al-Baqara*) is pronounced as *Alif, Lam, Mim*, and is distinguished from the word *A'lam* الم , which is written in the same way, and appears 78 times in the Qur'an (e.g., Qur'an 2:33, 2:106, 2:107, 2:243, 3:23, 96:14, and 105:1,2).
- All the *Surahs* which begin with abbreviated letters make some mention of (or reference to) the Qur'an (or the book).

- Except for the three *Surahs* : *Al-Baqara* (2), *Al-i'Imran* (3), and *Ar-Ra'ad* (13), which were revealed in Medina; all the other *Surahs* with prefixed letters were revealed in Mecca.
- Each of the single letters, which are prefixed to *Surahs Sa'ad* (38), *Qa'af* (50) and *Al-Qalam* (68), does not constitute a verse. The same applies to the two letters طس in *Surah* (27); the three letters الر in *Surahs* (10) to (12),(14) and (15); and the four letters المر in *Surah* (13).
- The five letters in *Surah Ash-Shura* (42) occur in two separate verses. The First verse has two letters حم , and the second verse has three letters عسق
- The two letters حم occur in seven consecutive *Surahs* (*Surahs* 40 to 46).
- The three letters الر occur in six consecutive *Surahs* (*Surahs* 10 to 15).
- A number of conjectures have been made as to the exact meaning of each particular letter or combination of letters. For example, some feel that the combination of the letters الر , حم , ن constitute the word الرحمن (Most Gracious). However, it is agreed that only Allah (SWT) knows the exact meaning of the abbreviated letters. □

Twenty Nine Surahs Start with Letters

