

DOGANA LAI LATUL QADR

By

Afzal ul-'Ulama Maulana Al-Haj Hazrat Syed Najmuddin^{RA}

[Former President, Majlis-e-Ulama-e-Mahdavia, Hind]

English Translation

By

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of Channapatna, Karnataka.

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For the Esal-e-Sawab of my late mother.

-By an anonymous donor.

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FOREWORD

It has always been a practice of Idara-e-Tableegh-e-Mahdavia to preach the teachings of Imamuna Mehdi-e-Maoud (AS) in a simple and easy understanding manner.

In this context, the "Idara" has published (58) booklets so far on various topics. AS a 59th Publication "Idara" is publishing the booklet "Dogana-e-Lailatul Qadr" Written by Hazrath Afzalul Ulama Moulana alhaj syed Najmuddin Sahib Qibla, former President of Majlis Ulema-e-Mehdavia Hind, 3rd time in view of the usefulness of the booklet during the holy month of RAMADAN.

So that the public in general and the Mahdavis in particular may realize the importance, significance, superiority & blessing of God in the divine night of power (Shab-e-Qadr) and to understand the obligation (farz) of Dogana-e-lailatul Qadr.

We are grateful to Hazrath faqeer Alhaj Syed Ziaullah Yadullahi resident of Channapatna for his valuable services rendered in translating the booklet into English, similarly we are thankful to Janab Syed Mohammed suhail, resident of Bangalore for his efforts and cooperation extended towards Idara.

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May God bless all of them for their efforts and also accept the little efforts made by Idara in this regard.

AMEEN

Syed Abdul Quader Shakabe

General Secretary

Idara Tabligh-e-Mahdavia

Musheerabad, Hyderabad-20, A.P. India.

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Acronyms used in the book

SLM	Sallallahu Alahi Wo Sallam
AS	Alaihis Salam
RZ	Razi Allahu Anhu/Anha/Anhum
RA	Rahmatullahi Alaih

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

DOGANA

LAYLATUL-QADR

By Afzal al-'Ulama Maulana Al-Haj Hazrat Syed Najmuddin^{RA}

In *Dogana-e-Shab-e-Qadr* it is obligatory [farz] to say two rak'at [cycles] of namaz in the leadership of an imam in congregation [ba-jama'at]. It has been made obligatory in view of the *fazilat* [superiority] of the night. In respect of this night, Allah says: "The Night of Power is better than a thousand months."¹

The situation prompting the revealing of this Verse is that on one occasion Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} stated that a worshipper [zahid] Sham'oon had struggled in the way of Allah for a thousand months. He^{SLM} then gave a long account of his endeavours. Hazrat Imam Razi^{RA} has reported this from Mujahid^{RZ}:

From among the Children of Israel, a person worshiped throughout the night and waged a struggle [in the way of Allah] throughout the day. Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} and his companions were astonished. Allah revealed this Verse that for the community of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} the Night of Power was superior to the thousand-month worship and struggle of the Israeli worshipper.

Another parable says that Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} said that Hazrat Ayub^{AS}, Zachariah^{AS}, Kharqil^{AS} and Yusha^{AS} had never disobeyed Allah and each of them had worshiped Allah for eighty years. The Prophet^{SLM}'s companions were sad that their ages were between sixty and seventy years. They thought they were spending one-third of their life in sleeping. The rest of their lives were spent in earning, sickness and laziness. Their question was, "How many years would we be able to spend in worship?" This thought was burdensome even on the mind of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. It occurred to him that the ages of the previous communities [of the early prophets] were longer and they could worship for longer periods and thus earn more *sawab* [rewards] and "my community [ummat] would feel

¹ *Qadr* has been variously translated as 'Power'--AMD, MMP, AYA; 'Glory'—SAL. AMD adds: *Qadr* is power, honour, glory and also decree, and destiny. It means that He distributed, divided, or apportioned [as though by measure] sustenance, or the means of subsistence. — *Tafsir-ul-Quran*, Vol. 1V. p. 518.

ashamed for its scarce *sawab*.” The command of Allah arrived, “Do not grieve, O Muhammad!”² Even though the ages of the members of Muhammad^{SLM}'s community are small, they will be given a night, the worship during which would be superior to the worship of a thousand months. Consequently, the Chapter, *Qadr* [Power, Glory] of Quran was revealed. It reads [in translation]:

“Lo! We have revealed it³ on the Night of Power.”⁴

“Ah, what will convey unto thee what the Night of Power is!

“The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.”⁵

“The angels and the Spirit⁶ descend⁷ therein, by the permission of their Lord, with all decrees.

“(That Night is) Peace until the rising of the dawn.”⁸

The Quran descended all of a sudden from the Preserved Tablet [*Lauh-e-Mahfuz*] to the sky of this world on the Night of Power. In the Cave of Hira, five Verses of the Sura-e-*Iqra*⁹ were revealed. The research scholars [*muhaqqiqin*] hold that it was the 27th of Ramazan. And then the Quran was revealed little by little as needed to Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} in the subsequent 23 years.

About this Night of Power, Hazrat Prophet Muhammad Mustafa^{SLM} was told, “What have you understood about its importance?” And then Allah Himself answered the question by saying, “The Night of Power is superior to a thousand months.” That is, the worship of this one Night is superior to the worship of one thousand months.” A thousand months are equal to 83 years and four months. In other words, the worship of this one Night is better than the worship of thirty thousand days and thirty thousand nights. And how better is it? Allah alone knows the answer to this question. The word ‘Spirit’ purports to mean Hazrat Jibril^{AS}. Allah says that Hazrat Jibril^{AS} and innumerable angels descent with all kinds of decrees of Good [*Khair*] under His command to reach the His *Faiz* [Bounty] to the inhabitants of the Earth. This descent of the angels begins at the sunset to the sunrise [the next morning]. In other words, the whole Night is full of magnificence and respect and there is peace and peace alone through out the Night.

The Verse, “*Innaaa ‘anzalnaahu fii Laylatil-QADR* [Surely We have sent it (the Quran) down on the Night of Glory—SAL].” There is no doubt that the pronoun refers to Quran. It is the final and certain meaning: “We have sent the Holy Quran during the Night of Power (or Glory).

² This command of Allah could not be found in the Index of Quran. Perhaps, it is a *Hadith-e-Qudsi*.

³ That is, the Holy Quran. —AMD, *Tafsir-ul-Quran*, Vol. IV, P. 518.

⁴ *Qadr* is Power, honour, glory, and also decree, and destiny. *Qadr* means, “He (God) distributed, divided, or apportioned, [as though by measure], sustenance, or the means of subsistence. Hence, some say, the appellation, *Laylatul Qadr* is the Night wherein the means of subsistence are apportioned. —AMD, *Ibid*.

⁵ To pray in that single night is even more meritorious than to pray during these long months. The Apostle of Allah said: “Whoever keepeth awake during the night of Qadr with faith and in view of God, shall be forgiven that which is past of His sin.” —AMD, *Ibid*.

⁶ Gabriel, the angel of Revelation. —AMD, *Ibid*.

⁷ (on earth). —AMD, *Ibid*.

⁸ Quran, *Surat al-Qadr* [Power, Glory]. S. 97: 1-5 MMP.

⁹ Quran, S. 96 *Alaq* [The Clot]

Allah Most High has said in another place, *“Wal-Kitaabil-Mubiini Innaaa ‘anzalnaahu fii laylatim-mubaarakatin ‘innaa kunnaa munziriin. Fiihaa yufraqu kullu ‘amrin hakiim. [By the clear Book. Verily, We have sent it down on a night of blessing with intent to warn mankind against wrong living—On a night wherein everything is set in right perspective—]”*¹⁰

One should remember here that ‘*Kitaabil Mubiinii*’ does not stand for the Holy Quran and ‘*Laylatim-Mubaarakatin*’ does not stand for ‘*Laylatul-Qadr*’ [Night of Power]. But the term *Kitab-e-Mubin* stands for the *Lauh-e-Mahfuz* [the Preserved Tablet] and the term *Laylat-e-Mubaarakah* stands for the *Shab-e-Barat*, which falls on the 14th night of *Sha’aban* [eighth month of *Hijra* lunar calendar year]. Great detail about this night has been given in the *ahadith* [Traditions of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}] that the incidents and accidents, that are destined to occur during the ensuing year, are transferred from the Preserved Tablet to the skies of the world on that night. Then the records are prepared and are handed over to the angels and the accountants [*mutasaddi*] with the instructions that they should act according to them throughout the following year.

However, some commentators [of Quran] hold that the term *Kitab-e-Mubin* means *Laylatul-Qadr* and the *Laylat-e-Mubaarakah* means *Laylatul-Qadr* [*Shab-e-Qadr*—Night of Power]. Some others say that *Laylat-e-Mubaarakah* is *Shab-e-Barat*, and that the commands relating to destiny descend from the Protected Tablet to the skies of the world on that night. But they are handed over to the angels on the Night of Power [*Shab-e-Qadr*]. But to the *muhaqqiqin-mufassirin* [research scholars and commentators of Quran] hold both the interpretations to be wrong. They hold that *Kitab-e-Mubin* is not the Holy Quran but it is the Preserved Tablet and *Laylat-e-Mubaarakah* stands for *Shab-e-barat*, and not for *Shab-e-Qadr*. Further, the commands about the destiny are handed over to the angels on *Shab-e-Barat*, and not on *Shab-e-Qadr*. This is the most correct saying. The reason for this is that the terms, *Kitab-e-Mubin* and *Kitab* have been used in Quran in both meanings, denoting Quran and *Lauh-e-Mahfuz* [Preserved Tablet].

For instance, in the Quranic Verse, *“This is the Book: in it is guidance, sure, without doubt to those who fear Allah,”*¹¹ the term ‘Book’ stands for the Holy Quran.” Similarly, in the Verse, *“Now a light hath assuredly come to you from God and a Book of illumination [Kitaabum-Mubiin]”*¹², the term ‘light’ means the *zath* [essence, nature] of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} and ‘Book of Illumination’ stands for the Holy Quran. In the same manner, both the term ‘*kitab*’ and the term ‘*Kitab-e-Mubin*’ have been used for the Preserved Tablet also. For instance, in the Verse, *“Everything have We recorded in a Book [Kitaabaa],”*¹³ the term Book stands for the Preserved Tablet. Further, in the Verse, *“He knoweth whatsoever is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falleth but He knoweth it; and there is not a grain in the shaded parts of the earth, nor a thing green or sere which hath not been taken note of in the luminous Book [of Divine Knowledge],”*¹⁴ the term ‘Luminous Book’ [or *Kitaabim-Mubiin*] stands for the Preserved Tablet. Also in the Verse, *“And not an atom’s weight in the earth or in the sky escapeth your Lord, or what is less than that or grater than that, but it is (written) in a clear Book [Kitaabim-Mubiin],”*¹⁵ the term ‘clear Book’ stands for the Preserved Tablet. [It is obvious that] in these verses the term ‘*kitab-e-Mubin*’ stands for the Preserved Tablet, and not the Holy Quran. When the term ‘*Kitab-e-Mubin*’ has been used both for the Holy Quran and the Preserved Tablet, it is not necessary that the term ‘*Kitab-e-*

¹⁰ Quran, S. 44: 2-4 SAL.

¹¹ Quran, S. 2: 2 AYA.

¹² Quran, S. 5: 15 SAL.

¹³ Quran, S. 78: 29 MMP.

¹⁴ Quran, S. 6: 59 SAL.

¹⁵ Quran, S. 10: 62 MMP.

Mubin' used in Surah *Ad-Dukhan* [Chapter 44] should connote the Holy Quran Alone. Here, the term '*Kitab-e-Mubin*' stands for the Preserved Tablet.

In this context, the meaning of the Verse, "*By the clear Book. Verily, We have sent it down on a night of blessing with intent to warn mankind against wrong living—On a night wherein everything is set in right perspective—*"¹⁶ would be like this: We have sent down the Preserved Tablet in the Night of Blessing." But the sending down of the Preserved Tablet is not possible. Since using the real meaning of the Book [that is, the Preserved Tablet] is not feasible, its metaphoric meaning will be used according to the usual rules. The metaphorical meaning would be the *Ahkam-ul-Kitaab* [commands or rules of the Book—the Preserved Tablet]. In view of this explanation, the meaning of the Quranic Verse would be: "We have sent down the commands or rules of the Preserved Tablet on a Night of Blessing [that is, *Shab-e-Barat—14th* night of *Sha'ban*]." Similarly, the Night of Blessing and the Night of Power [or Glory] are two separate nights. It would not be useful to treat the two as one night. The imperatives of eloquence demand that each word or sentence should give the benefit of a new meaning.

As such, the meaning of the above Quranic Verse [S. 44: 2-4] would be like this: "The impending events of the forthcoming year are sent down from the Preserved Tablet to the sky of the earth on the Night of Blessing and the commands are given to the concerned operators of the destiny the same night." The Night of Power or Glory does not come into the picture at all here. This Night of Power is the night of dignity and generosity. On this night the Holy Quran was sent from the Preserved Tablet to the sky of the world. The people who have thought that the Night of Power and the Night of Blessing are one and the same are wrong. They were misled by the word *Qadr*¹⁷ and thought that on the Night of *Qadr* [Power, Glory], the destinies would be sent down or destinies would be distributed. This is wrong.

The author of *Tafsir-e-Tabari* writes: "The manifest Quran indicates that the word of only that person is correct who says that the deeds [worship] of the Night of Power is better than the deeds [worship] of a thousand months, not including the Night of Power. The other sayings are wrong. The intellect, the Traditions [of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}] and [Quranic] Verses do not support such sayings."

At this point, we are not concerned with the exegesis of the *Suratul Qadr* or its pros and cons. We are concerned here with the superiority and eminence of the Night of Power. Allah has said at one place in Quran: "*Ramadhan [Ramazan] is the [month] in which was sent down the Quran...*"¹⁸ And in the *Suratul Qadr*, it is said: "*Lo! We revealed it [the Holy Quran] on the Night of Power.*"¹⁹ From these, it is conclusively proved that the Night of Power falls in the month of Ramazan. But the date of that month on which the Night of Power falls has not been expressly stated. Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} certainly knew the date, but all he said was: "Look for the Night of Power in the last ten days o Ramazan." Or he said, "The Night of Power is the same when you were prostrating in water and mud." It is for this reason that the sayings of the companions^{RZ} of the Prophet^{SLM} and their followers are not the same.

The prudence in keeping this date hidden by Allah and His Apostle was to see that the definite information about the date was given to the people through Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}²⁰ Hence, Allah Most

¹⁶ Quran, S. 44: 2-4 SAL.

¹⁷ The Arabic word '*Qadr*' means extent, scope, quantity, amount, degree, rate, measure, number, sum, rank, divine, divine foreordainment, predestination, fate, destiny, lot etc. *Arabic English Dictionary*, pp. 745-746.

¹⁸ Quran, S. 2: 185 AYA

¹⁹ Quran, S. 97: 1 MMP.

²⁰ The titles of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} given here are: *Imam Khair al-Anam* [The Leader of the best of the Creation], *Khalifatullahil-Waiood* [The Vice-Regent of Allah, the Most Loving], *Mahdi*

High, in His Infinite Superiority and Mercy, bestowed the definite information about the date of the Night of Power [on the mankind] through Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}. This is His Gift, His Beneficence. Gratefulness to the Beneficent is obligatory. One of the best methods of Gratefulness is to prostrate at the door of the Beneficent! Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has given a long list of the excellences of the Night of Power. All of them cannot be given here. Some of them are described below.

For instance, Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} said, "Hazrat Jibril^{AS} arrived on the Night of Power and said, 'Look at the Sky!' I looked at the sky. I saw that all the doors of the Paradise are open. The angel on the first door announces: 'Glad Tidings to him who is in bowing [*ruku*]²¹ tonight.' The angel on the second door is saying, 'Glad Tidings to him who is in prostration on this night.' The angel on the third door is saying, 'Glad Tidings to him who is supplicating Allah tonight.' The angel on the fourth door is saying, 'Glad Tidings to him who is in remembrance of Allah tonight.' The angel on the fifth door is saying, 'Glad Tidings to him who is lamenting scared of Allah Most High tonight.' The angel on the sixth door is saying, 'Glad Tidings to him who has bowed his head in abject submission to the will of Allah.' The angel on the seventh door is saying, 'Glad Tidings to him who is supplicating Allah that Allah Most High is answering his supplications.'"s

Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} said, "A [dining] Table will be laid under the Empyrean on the Day of Resurrection. The people who fast [in the world] are dining there while the others would be engaged in accounting [their deeds in the world]. They will tell Allah Most High, 'We are engaged in the accounting here while they are dining at the table of divine delicacies.' Allah Most High will tell them, 'These are those people who fasted during the month of Ramazan while you were eating and drinking. They worshipped during the Night of Power while you were in slumber.'"

Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} said, "On every sky an angel will announce on the Night of Power, 'For every believer [*mumin*], man or woman, who is supplicating Allah, in sincerity and repentance on this night, for forgiving his sins, seventy thousand angels will supplicate Allah Most High to forgive such a person [*mumin*] till the crack of dawn. And Allah Most High looks at him seventy times. And at every glance, He fulfils his every need.'"

Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} said, "There is an angel under the Empyrean. One of his feathers extends to the East and the other to the West. All the creatures of the world, except the mankind and the jinn, can hear his voice. He announces in a loud voice: 'Allah Most High answers the supplications of the person who repents [performs *tauba*] tonight. He helps the oppressed. He gives what a person asks for.'"

Hazrat Abu Huraira^{RZ} [a prominent companion of Prophet^{SLM}] says: 'Two persons converted to Islam. One of them was martyred in a *Ghazwa* [Holy war in which the Prophet^{SLM} participated]. The other died after a year. I saw in a dream that the person who had died one year later, was in the Paradise while the martyred one was still out of it. I was astonished. The next morning, I told Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} about my dream. He^{SLM} said, "By virtue of his being alive for a whole year, the person had the good fortune to fast in the month of Ramazan and to worship on the Night of Power. And the martyr did not get this opportunity.'"

al-Mau'ood [The Promised Rightly Guided], *Khatam-e-Vilayat-e-Muhammadia* [The Seal of the Sainthood of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}], *Alaihi Afzal as-Salat wat-Tahiyat* [May Allah Shower His best Salutations and Blessings upon him!].

²¹ *Ruku'* means: to bend the body, bow (especially in *namaz*); to kneel down; drop to one's knees. —Arabic English Dictionary, p. 358.

Hazrat Prophet Musa^{AS} said, "O *Parwardigar!*²² I want your proximity." Allah said, "O Musa! He who remains awake during the Night of Power [for worship], will achieve My proximity." Hazrat Musa^{AS} said, "I crave for Your Mercy and Beneficence." Allah Most High said, "He who shows mercy to a poor and indigent person on the Night of Power gets the right to My Mercy." Hazrat Musa^{AS} said, "I want to traverse the *pulsirat*²³ as the [that is, at the speed of] lightening." Allah said, "This is the attribute of the person who spends [his money] in charity on the Night of Power." Hazrat Musa^{AS} said, "I want to sit under the shade of the trees of Paradise and eat their fruits." Allah said, "This is the work of the person who performs *tasbih*²⁴ during the Night of Power." The specialty of the Night of Power is that Hazrat Jibril^{AS} and a great number of angels descend on earth that it becomes short of space. The Arabic word '*qadr*' also means narrowness and scarcity. Some of the *mufassirin* [commentators] say that this is the reason why it is called the Night of *Qadr*. But the correct version is that it is called the Night of *Qadr* because of its eminence and honour.

It is narrated that the angels send salutations to the people who are sleeping during the Night of Power. But Hazrat Jibril^{AS} sends his salutations on the people who are awake on the Night of Power. However, Allah sends His salutations on those who are engaged in His worship on the Night of Power. Hazrat Jibril^{AS} shakes hands with every worshipper on that night. This handshake causes the standing of the hair on end [due to fear] and ecstasy in the heart.

Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has said, "If a person worships [God] even for as short a period as it takes to milk a goat, the worship [of that period of time] is more dear to me than the fasting of a whole life.

Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has said, "If one were to say his missed [*Qaza*] *namaz* on the Night of Power, one would get the divine rewards of having said seventy *namazen*."

He^{SLM} also said, "Saying two *rak'at* supererogatory *namaz* on the Night of Power would be equal to saying one Obligatory [*farz*] *Namaz*.

He^{SLM} has said that saying two-*rak'at namaz* under the leadership of an *imam* in congregation on any night of Ramazan is equal to worshipping the whole night. This sacred *hadith* shows that when on any night of Ramazan the saying two *rak'at* supererogatory *namaz* is so sacred, the saying of two *rak'at namaz* under the leadership of the *imam* in a congregation [that is, the *dogana*] on the Night of Power too would be equal to worshipping the whole night.

It is narrated that if a person were to recite the *Surat Al-Qadr*,²⁵ he gets the divine rewards for having recited one-fourth of Quran. If he were to recite the said chapter once on any night of Ramazan, he gets the divine rewards of having recited half the Quran. But if he were to recite it once on the Night of Power, he gets the divine rewards for having recited the whole of the Quran. It for this reason that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} has recited that chapter thrice, in the obligatory [*farz*] *namaz*, in the *dogana-e-Shab-e-Qadr* and in the *witr namaz* on that night, that is, the Night of Power.

Similarly, great divine rewards are bestowed on the person who recites the *Surat Al-Ikhlās* [The Absolute Unity].²⁶ Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} was far away from Madina at the *Ghazwa* of Tabuk. Hazrat

²² *Parwardigar*, [a Persian word] means 'Cherisher'.

²³ *Pulsirat* is a bridge over which the righteous will pass into Paradise on the Day of Resurrection, according to Muslim.

²⁴ *Tasbih* is the act of praising God. Reciting the phrase *Subhan-Allahi-wal-Hamdu-lillahi* [Praises of God] repeatedly.

²⁵ Quran, S. 97: 1-5, that is, the whole chapter 97.

²⁶ Quran, S. 112: 1-4. It is also called *At-Tawhid* [The Unity].

Jibril^{AS} arrived and said, "O messenger of God! Mu'avia il-Mazni has died in Madina. I will fold the earth if you so permit me. You can perform his *namaz-e-janaza* [funeral prayers]." The Prophet^{SLM} said, "Do it!" Hazrat Jibril^{AS} fluttered one of his feathers. Lo and Behold! The bier was in front of the Prophet^{SLM}. He^{SLM} performed the funeral prayers. There were two lines [*saf*] of those who said the prayers. Besides Jibril^{AS} and Mikail^{AS}, there were seventy thousand angels who said their prayers. Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} asked, "Jibril! Why did Mu'avia get this divine reward?" Hazrat Jibril^{AS} said, "O Messenger of Allah! He used to recite the *Surat Al-Ikhlās* always and on the Night of Power. It was for this that Allah granted him this lofty rank."

One of the specialties of the Night of Power is that the repentance [*tauba*] is accepted instantly. His *tauba* is accepted even before he completes it. Acceptance welcomes him at the door of the Truth. If a person recites this supplication a hundred times, his *tauba* and his supplications for salvation would be immediately accepted. The angels who record his sins will forget [them]. His sins are erased from his record of sins. His various organs that are to tender evidence of his sins on the Doomsday would be devoid of the power to speak. The supplication in translation is as under: "O my Cherisher! Forgive me and accept my repentance [*tauba*]. You are the One who accepts the repentance and forgives." Hazrat 'Aisha^{RZ} asked Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}, "What deed should I perform if I find the Night of Power?" He^{SLM} said: "Recite this supplication: 'O Allah! You are the Great Forgiver. You like the act of forgiving our sins. Forgive us.'" Similarly, one should say four *rak'at* supererogatory *namaz* to escape the torment of death [*sakrat*] and retribution in the grave. In each of the *rak'ats* one should recite the *Surat Al-Fatiha*²⁷ and *Surat At-Takathur*²⁸ once each and *Surat Al-Ikhlās*²⁹ thrice.

In a sacred *Hadith*, it is stated that if a person says two *rak'at namaz* on the Night of Power and recites *Surat Al-Fatiha* once and *Surat al-Ikhlās* seven times in each *rak'at* and supplicates, "I seek Allah's Forgiveness and I repent in His Presence" seventy times, Allah Most High forgives his parents even before his rising [from the prayer mat].

There is no doubt that *namaz* is the Pillar of Religion [*Deen*] and the highest point or fountainhead of Obedience and Worship of God. Similarly, the supplications that are rewarded [*Ad'iya-e-Masura*], too which have been briefly stated above are certainly practicable. But, among the Mahdavis, the remembrance of Allah has great significance. And this is the greatest worship. No Mahdavi should be neglectful of it.

The whole night, from sunset to sunrise, is a treasure of Excellence and Honour. There is peace and peace alone throughout the night. However, there is great good fortune during the latter half of the night. This is the time when the Mercy of Allah Most High descends. A *hadith* says that during the second half of the Night of Power the Empyrean of the Merciful shakes and vibrates. Once, Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} was asked, "Which part of the night is superior for the worship?" He^{SLM} said, "The second half of the night." Allah's command came to Hazrat Imam Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS} only during the second half of the Night of Power, "Today is the Night of Power. Perform two *rak'at namaz*." On the basis of this command, the *dogana* of the Night of Power is performed only after midnight even to this day. This is the time of great Blessings and Bounty. Even if the earlier half of the Night were to pass in neglect, the latter part is spent in wakefulness and worship.

²⁷ Quran, S. 1 [the first chapter of Quran].

²⁸ Quran, S. 102 [the 102nd Chapter of Quran, warning against the piling up of wealth and man-power etc.].

²⁹ Quran, S. 112 [the 112th Chapter of Quran dealing of the divine Unity].

There should be no confusion in the heart [or mind] of any Mahdavi about the Night of Power. The rule of *Shariat* is that when the command of Allah is in imperative mood, it indicates that it is an obligation [farz]. For instance Allah Most High says in Quran, “*Wa ‘aqiimus-Salaata wa‘aatuz-Zakaata warka-uu ma‘ar-raaki-‘iin.*”³⁰ The order is direct, “Establish prayer and pay poor-due.” It is not said that *namaz* and *zakat*³¹ are *farz* [obligatory]. Similarly, Hazrat Imam Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS} is the *Vice-Regent* of Allah and free from erring. Since we have received the command to perform two-*rak‘at namaz* through an Imam^{AS} who is free from erring, it [the command] is obligatory and final. In the technical parlance of *Shariat* it is called *farz*. It is in this meaning that the *dogana-e-Shab-e-Qadr* is obligatory [farz] for us. Besides, there are other reasons to prove that the *dogana* is *farz* [obligatory].

To understand that the *dogana* is obligatory, it is necessary to first understand two points. First, what is the difference between a command of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} and the extractions of an issue by the imams of *Ijtihad* [interpretation and re-interpretation of Islamic Law]? Secondly, What is the relationship between Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} and the Imams of *Ijtihad*?

In regard to Hazrat Imam Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS}, not only the Mahdavis, but also the notables of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* believe that Mahdi^{AS} is free from erring. This issue can be discussed on the basis of both rational and other arguments. The rational argument is that Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} too is free from erring. The *ulama* [learned people] of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* hold that when the *zath* of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} the Vice-Regent of Allah, he must necessarily be free from erring. If he were not held to be free from erring, the commands he formulates would fall into a position where they could be true or false. Hence, his commands and interdictions will be shorn of security and immunity. Consequently, their acceptance will not be allowed rationally. Similarly, Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has said that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is a Vice-Regent of Allah. And it is obvious that the *zath* who is ennobled and distinguished as a Vice-Regent of Allah should be free from erring. His being free from erring is rationally necessary.

The *dalil-e-naqli* [the argument based on the sayings] is that Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has said, “Mahdi is from among my descendants and he will not err.” Various collections of *ahadith* [Traditions] report this saying of the Prophet^{SLM}. And on the basis of this *hadith*, the notables of *Ahl-e-Sunnat* have argued that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is free from erring. Hazrat Shaikh Muhiyuddin Ibn Arabi^{RA} writes in his book *Futuh-at-e-Makkiah*, Chapter 366: “Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has not said this in respect of any imam of the religion [*deen*] that “he would be my heir, will follow in my footsteps and will not err. He has said this only in respect of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}.”

He^{RA} further writes: “Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has said that Mahdi^{AS} will not err. By virtue of his not erring, Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has associated the Imam Mahdi^{AS} with the apostles.” [Ibid.]

The well-known *Hanafi* scholar *Allamah* Tahtawi^{RA} writes in his book, *Sharah Dur-rul Mukhtar*, in respect of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}: “Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} will not err as Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is innocent in his commandments in accordance with the saying of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}.”

Mullah Muinuddin has written in his book, *Darasaat-al-Labib*, arguing on the basis of the same Prophetic Tradition that ‘Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} not committing a mistake is not based on the mere belief like that of the other saints [*awlia Allah*] being protected from mistakes. But Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} not committing a mistake is based on clear, definite and decisive argument. The committing of a mistake is

³⁰ Quran, S. 2: 43 SAL. [It means, “And observe prayers and pay the poor-due and bow in prayer with those who bow.”]

³¹ *Zakat* is poor-due.

impossible for the Imam Mahdi^{AS} because Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} is bound to be truthful in his giving the information that the Mahdi^{AS} will not err.'

The sacred Tradition, "He is from among my descendants, he will follow in my footsteps and will not err," has two parts. The first is that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is among the descendants of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. Secondly, he is innocent. The first part is proved by the Traditions reported by Abu Dawood, Dar Qatni, Tabarani, Hakim and Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal^{RA}, that Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has said that Imam Mahdi^{AS} will be from among my descendants and he will be my namesake and his father will be the namesake of my father.

The narratives reported by the *muhaddisin*, Hakim, Abu Na'eem and Ibn Maja^{RA} support the second part of the Tradition. They quote Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} as saying, "When you hear that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} has appeared, pay fealty to him even if you have to go to him crawling on ice, because he is the *Khalifatullah* [the Vice-Regent of Allah]." It is obvious that the Vice-Regent of Allah has essentially to be *masoom* [free from erring]. Hence, the Tradition is correct both in its word and meaning.

This saying of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} prove two points: One, that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is innocent or free from erring; and, two, that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} will follow in the footsteps of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} or follow him perfectly [*kamil ittiba'*]. And none among the imams of *ijtihad* [interpretation and re-interpretation of the Islamic Code] are bestowed with this glory and honour. The *Ahl-e-Sunnat* believes that the sayings of the *mujtahid* or imam of *ijtihad* can either be correct or incorrect. Contrary to this, the *zath* of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is the vice-regent of Allah and free from erring. Hence, his word and deed are free from even the shadow of error.

Mullah Ali Qari writes, "It is wrong that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} will follow [*taqlid*] Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifa^{RA} because he is an absolute *mujtahid*. He is not permitted to follow anybody."

But the saying of Mullah Ali Qari that Mahdi^{AS} is an absolute *mujtahid* is wrong because Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is neither a *muqallid* [one who follows others] nor a *mujtahid-e-mutlaq* because a *mujtahid-e-mutlaq* too can go wrong. It is because of this that the research scholars of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* have opposed the sayings of Mullah Ali Qari.

Hazrat Imam Tahtawi^{RA} writes, "Mullah Ali Qari has dismissed with convincing arguments the saying of the person who holds that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} will follow Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifa^{RA}. But Mullah Ali Qari has decreed Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} as the *mujtahid-e-Mutlaq*, which contradicts Hazrat Ibn Arabi^{RA}'s opinion recorded in his book, *Futuhut*.

After this, Tahtawi^{RA} has quoted Ibn Arabi^{RA}'s opinion in detail. Briefly, the opinion of Ibn Arabi^{RA} is, "Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} will issue the same command that is inspired [*ilqa*] to him from Allah and this is the *Shariat* of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. Had Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} been alive, and if a case were to come before him, he would have given the same judgment that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} has given. Analogy and presumption is prohibited [*haram*] on Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}. It is for this reason that Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has said, "Mahdi will follow in my footsteps and will not err."

Imam Tahtawi^{RA} further writes, "This proves that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is not a *mujtahid* because a *mujtahid* issues his commands on the basis of analogy and presumption and analogy and presumption is prohibited [*haram*] for Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}. Further, Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is not a *mujtahid* because a *mujtahid* is prone to erring while the *zath* Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is free from erring because the Imam^{AS} is innocent on the evidence of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}."—[See: Tahtawi^{RA}, *Hashia Dur-rul-Mukhtar*].

All the religious commands are extracted from the Quranic Verses and the Traditions. But if one were to ponder over the differences among the formulations of the imams of *ijtihad*, one finds that they are based on the sources on which they base their formulations. For instance, one imam formulates a

command on the basis of one Quranic Verse and a Tradition on a given issue, while another imam formulates his command based on another Quranic Verse and another tradition on the same issue. Among these various commands, it is possible that the argument of one may be strong while that of the other could be weak. The third may be entirely wrong. But since all the commands are based on the Quran and Traditions, it cannot be said that the said commands are repugnant to the *Shariat* of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. The rule of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* regarding the differences of opinion among the imams is that the Truth dominates [*da'er-o-sa'er*] all the four Imams of *ijtihad*.

Similarly, the terms, *farz, wajib, sunnat, mustahab etc., are* technical terms. We find very few instances where any deed in the worship [*ibadaat*] has been decreed as *farz, sunnat etc.* from Allah or His apostle. But the *mujtahidin* have pondered over the Quranic Verses and Traditions, the importance of a given command, the insistence, emphasis and other factors regarding such commands, and have arrived at some conclusions on the basis of analogy and presumption. They have finally decided that a given deed is a *farz*, or a *wajib* etc. It is for this reason that a given deed [or *f'e*] is *farz* in the opinion of one *mujtahid* while the same deed is *wajib, sunnat, or mustahab* in the opinion of another *mujtahid*. A clear example of such differences of opinion is that while Imam Azam^{RA} holds that the *masah* of a quarter of the head in *Wazu* [ablutions] is *farz*, and the *masah* of the whole head is *mustahab*, Hazrat Imam Shafe'i^{RA} holds that the *masah* of the whole head is *farz*.

Allah Most High has said in Quran, "O ye who believe! When ye rise up for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands up to the elbows, and lightly rub your heads and (wash) your feet up to the ankles..."³² This Verse shows that there are four *farz* [obligatory deeds] in the *wazu* [ablutions] for the prayers. But some of the Imams of *ijtihad* have added some more actions as *farz* on the basis of some Traditions, the sequence of the sentence and Arabic grammar and synthesis, besides the clear injunctions of the Quran. For instance, Hazrat Imam Malik^{RA} said that the washing these organs one after the other in quick succession too is a *farz*. Hazrat Imam Shafe'i^{RA} has said that the expression of intention by the words of mouth too is *farz*. Hazrat Imam Ahmad Hanbal^{RA} has added that the recitation of *Bismillah* too is a *farz*. But Hazrat Imam Azam^{RA} holds that all these three actions are *mustahab* [desirable or preferable].

The rules and issues are extracted from the Quran and Traditions and any action is decreed as a *farz, wajib or mustahab*. Similarly, one can argue about the question whether the *dogana* of the Night of Power is a *farz* or otherwise on the basis of Quran and the Traditions. However, this reality should not be ignored that there is a clear distinction between the way the rules and issues are extracted by Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} and the ordinary Imams of *Ijtihad*, not only among the Mahdavis but also among the notables of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat*. The difference is that whatever the *mujtahidin* say is on the basis of their opinions and analogy. And there is a possibility of error in their thinking and formulating their opinions. But Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is free from error, Vice-Regent of Allah and the Ruler of the *Shariat* of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. His formulating the commands, rules and issues is not extracted from his own opinion or thinking. They are extracted directly from the commands of Allah Most High and the teachings of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. They are in effect the commands of Allah Most High and His Apostle.

Keeping this principle in view, if one considers the question of whether the *dogana* of the Night of Power is a *farz* or not, it is proved beyond a shadow of doubt that it is definitely and finally a *farz*. The Night of Power has been mentioned in the Holy Quran. Its importance and superiority too is emphasized in Quran that it is better than a thousand months. In other words, the worship in this one night brings more divine rewards than those of the worship of a thousand months. Only Allah Most High knows how many more divine rewards it brings. During this Night, the Holy Ghost [*Ruh-al-Amin*] and angels descend

³² Quran, S. 5: 6 AYA.

to the earth under the command of Allah Most High. There is only Peace and Peace abounding on this Night.

The greatness of the Night of Power and the superiority of worshipping on this Night is proved from the Traditions of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. He^{SLM} has said, "If the person reposes Faith in Allah and worships with the intention of achieving divine rewards on the Night of Power, all his past sins will be forgiven. —[*Kanz Al-'amal, Vol. I*]. He^{SLM} has also said, "All the past sins of the person who finds the Night of Power and worships in it will be forgiven. —[*Ibid.*]. Again, he^{SLM} has said, "All the past and future sins of the person who reposes Faith in Allah Most High and worships on the Night of Power will be forgiven. —[*Ibid.*].

Besides these sayings, Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} used to take great care and performed the deeds of worship with great enthusiasm and devotion as soon as the last ten days of the month of Ramazan started. He used to collect the members of his family and say *namaz*. There are *ahadith* reported by Hazrat Bibi 'Aisha^{RZ} in *Mishkat*, a book of Traditions, which speak of the importance Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} gave to worship during the last ten days of the holy month of Ramazan. She^{RZ} says: "Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} used to perform pious deeds and worship with great care and diligence during the last ten days of Ramazan. He did not do so in the last ten days of any other month." Again she^{RZ} says: "With the onset of the last ten days of the month of Ramazan, Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} would become alert and worshipped throughout the nights. He would assemble the members of his family for the worship."

Despite this accepted eminence of the Night of Power, and the significance Hazrat Prophet Muhammad Mustafa^{SLM} attached to worship during this Night, he^{SLM}, his companions^{RZ} and the Imams of *Ijtihad* have differed in identifying this Night. Some have said that this Night rotated throughout the year. Some others have said that this Night occurred in the month of Ramazan. Even those who hold that this Night fell in the month of Ramazan have differed in fixing this Night from the 1st to the 29th night of Ramazan. No preference can be given to a person who has fixed the date of this Night to the date fixed by another person because all of them are not free from erring.

Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has not himself fixed the date on which the Night of Power would fall. He has of course said, "Look for the Night of Power in the last ten days of the month of Ramazan." From a *hadith* of Abu Dawood, it is inferred that Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} had indicated that the 27th Night of Ramazan was the Night of Power. But that is only one *hadith* [*Khabar-e-wahid*]. Such a *hadith* does not give credible and definite knowledge. For this reason, great difference of opinion is found in fixing the Night of Power. For instance, the following companions of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} have reported that the Night of Power falls on the date of Ramazan given against their names. Abu Rizin—1st; Muhammad bin Ishaq—11; Hasan Basari—17th; Uns—19th; Bilal and Ibn Mas'ood—24th; Abu Zar Ghifari—25th; Ibn Abbas and many other Companions—27th; 'Aisha—29th. [*Razi-Allahu Anhum*].

Abdul Haq *Muhaddis* Dahlavi writes in his book, *Sharah-e-Mishkat*, "To Hazrat Imam Azam^{RA}, the Night of Power is not specially attached to Ramazan. Another narrative says that it is in the month of Ramazan but it can fall on any night of that month. But the well-known narrative is that Imam Azam^{RA} has fixed it on the 27th of Ramazan. Imam Malik^{RA} says that the Night of Power is in the last ten days of Ramazan and that it could fall on any of the nights in those last ten days. Imam Shafe'i^{RA} holds that the 21st night of Ramazan is the Night of Power.

The uncertainty in fixing the date of the Night of Power turned into certainty when Allah Most High communicated to Hazrat Iman Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS} that the Night of Power fell on the 27th night of Ramazan. Allah Most High also commanded him, that as thanksgiving for the great favour bestowed on him and his followers, they should perform two cycles [or *dogana*] of ritual prayers on this Night.

Hazrat Imam Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS} was in his journey to Khorasan. He had departed from Thatta with the intention to go to Qandahar [now in Afghanistan] and had reached Kaaha, when the Crescent moon of the month of Ramazan was sighted. On the 27th Night of Ramazan, he went to his *hujra* [room] after the night [*'Isha*] prayers. A little after midnight, the command of Allah Most High arrived. "Tonight is the Night of Power. Perform two cycles [*rak'at*] ritual prayers with your friends and companions in thanksgiving." Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} came out of his room and informed his companions of the Divine Favour. An announcement was made. The companions arrived. With them, Hazrat Imam^{AS} said the *dogana namaz* in congregation. After this, Hazrat Imam^{AS} performed the *dogana* in congregation at Farah Mubarak with a huge gathering of the companions for two consecutive years.

The Night of Power was hidden from the whole of the *ummat* [Muslim Community], except of course Hazrat Prophet Muhammad Mustafa^{SLM}. This was revealed to us [*Mahdavis*] through Hazrat Imam Syed Muhammad Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS}. We, all Mahdavis, perform this prayer in congregation as a *farz* [obligation] in obedience to Allah Most High and in the emulation [*itttiba'*] of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}. A narrative in *Insaf Nama* quotes Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} as saying: "Allah commands, 'O Syed Muhammad! These two *rak'at* are *farz* for you and the group of your followers.'"

Three points need to be analysed here: [1] performing the *namaz* during the Night of Power; [2] the fixing of two *rak'at*; and [3] to know that it is an obligation [*farz*]. (i) No Muslim can object to saying of *Namaz*. (ii) The fixing of two-*rak'at namaz* too is not objectionable. The rule is that the command should be on the least quantum. It is obvious that the least number of *rak'at* in *namaz* is two. The term, *namaz*, does not apply to less than two *rak'at*. This could be the reason for fixing two-*rak'at namaz* for the Night of Power. (iii) Accepting this *namaz* as *farz* too is not objectionable on rational or other grounds according to the principles of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat*. One needs to ponder over the differences in sayings of the companions and the *mujtahidin* regarding the Night of Power is because all these sayings were those of people who are not free from erring. There was no reason to prefer the saying of one to that of the other. All these sayings give the benefit of presumption. Compared to these sayings, it is Allah's great Mercy and Grace that He has given us the definite and final knowledge of the date of the Night of Power. Our gratitude for this divine Favour is in accordance with the Quranic injunction, "...Be grateful to Me, and reject not Faith."³³

Some of the *ahadith* show that each of the ritual prayers said five times a day was in thanksgiving for the divine favours conferred on one prophet or the other. Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qader Jilani^{RA} quotes a *hadith*, which is as follows briefly: "A companion^{RZ} from among the helpers [of Madina] asked Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}, "Who had first performed the *fajr* [pre-dawn] *namaz*?" Hazrat Prophet^{SLM} said, "Adam^{AS} had first said the pre-dawn *namaz*. Ibrahim^{AS} had first said the *zuhr* [post-noon] *namaz*, when Allah saved him from the fire of Namrood [King Nimrod]. Hazrat Yaqub^{AS} performed the 'Asr [late afternoon] *namaz* when Hazrat Jibril^{AS} gave him the glad tidings about his son Hazrat Yusuf^{AS}. When Allah accepted the repentance of Hazrat Dawood^{AS}, he performed the *maghrib* [post-sunset] *namaz*. And finally, when Allah Most High saved Hazrat Yunus^{AS} from the bosom of the fish, he performed the '*Isha* [night] *namaz*. —[*Ghaniya*].

Hence, the performance of two *rak'at namaz* as *farz* [obligation] in thanksgiving on the Night of Power is not repugnant to the religion of Islam. In fact, it is in perfect consonance with the *sunnat* [practice] of the prophets^{AS}.

We have already discussed that the *zath* [essence, nature] of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is the Vice-Regent and that being free of erring is a concomitant attribute of the Vice-Regency of Allah. This is confirmed by

³³ Quran, S. 2: 152 AYA.

the *hadith*, which quotes Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} as saying, "Mahdi is from among my descendants, he will follow in my footsteps and will not err." The divine inspiration the Mahdi^{AS} [who is innocent] receives is definite, final and correct.

Hazrat Imam Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS} gets his [divine] knowledge from Allah Most High and the soul of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. The command that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} issues is not based on his thinking, estimation and opinion. It is indeed the command of Allah and His messenger. It is the true *Shairat* of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. Had the Prophet^{SLM} been present and a certain case was submitted to him he would have confirmed the judgment that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} would have given in such a case. Or he would have given the same judgment as that of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}. This lofty position of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is the specialty of all Vice-Regents of Allah. He has commanded that the *dogana* of the Night of Power is *farz* [obligatory]. Then it is essentially a *farz*.

However, even if one were to ignore these attributes of the lofty position of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}, and wants to discuss it on the basis of the sources of the Islamic commands and rules, it is obvious that the *mujtahidin* are not free from erring. Their disciples also agree that they [the *mujtahidin*] are prone to be wrong. Despite this, the *nujtahidin* can decree that a given deed is *farz*, *wajib*, *makruh* or *haram*. And their disciples and followers accept them, in accordance with the commands of their *mujtahid*, as *farz*, *wajib* or *na-jaiz* [impermissible]. We have already given some examples of this earlier. There are many more examples of such cases. Since the commands and issues of these *mijtahidin* are extracted from the Quran and *hadith*, nobody can say that these commands and issues are different from the Islamic commands and rules or repugnant to Quran and *hadith*. It is usually thought that the *mujtahid* has decreed his command on the basis of a certain command of Quran and *hadith* or a certain aspect of them; and that another *muhtahid* has decreed his command on the basis of another command of the Quran or *hadith* or certain other aspect of such command.

Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} too has given his command about the *dogana* of the Night of Power on the basis of his lofty position as the Vice-Regent of Allah and in accordance with the direct divine inspiration to him about it. But if one were to ignore this aspect, it can also be said that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS}'s command is based on Quran and *hadith*. We have already stated that the Night of Power has been mentioned in Quran. The Quran too proves its glory and superiority. The Quranic Verse, "*The Night of Power is better than a thousand months,*"³⁴ is '*ibarat-un-nas*'³⁵ in the parlance of the *ulama-e-Usul* is witness to the superiority of the Night of Power. Similarly, this Verse implies a clear command in imperative mood that one must worship Allah on this night. Its meaning is that the clear commands of the *Shariat* are extracted from the Quran and *hadith*. In such cases, what is understood from the manifest saying is what is intended or expected. Then we say that this is proved on the basis of the *ibarat-un-nas*. For instance, when the Quran says, "*Wa 'aqimus-Salaata wa 'aatuz-Zakaata...*"³⁶ it means that the saying of *namaz* and paying *zakat* is proved through the *ibarat-un-nas*.

However, *iqtaza-un-Nas* means that the command that is being proved is not clearly understood by the manifest saying, but for the proof of the command one should understand that a word is missing there, [and that if the missing word is added] the command becomes clear. For instance, The Quranic Verse, "*Hurri-mat 'alaykumul-maytatu...*"³⁷ means 'forbidden unto you are carrion.' Here the word, '*akala*', [eating] is missing. In other words, the Verse means that 'forbidding unto you is eating carrion'.

³⁴ Quran, S. 97: 3 MMP.

³⁵ *Ibarat-un-nas* means the text of Quran that is clear and definite in its meanings or that states clearly what is right and what is wrong.

³⁶ Quran, S. 2: 43 SAL. It means: "*And observe prayers and pay poor-due...*"

³⁷ Quran, S. 5: 3 SAL. It means 'Forbidden unto you are carrion...[MMP].

Similarly, the sentence 'Night of Power is better than thousands months' proves the superiority of the Night. But without accepting that a word is missing here, the meaning will not become clear as to in what way it is better. From the Prophetic Traditions, it is obvious that the missing word is *ibadat* [worship]. In other words, the Verse means that the worship on this night is better than the worship of a thousand months. Hence, the superiority of the Night of Power is proved by the *ibarat-un-nas*. However, the meaning of the command is proved by *iqtaza-un-nas* that superiority of the Night is in *ibadat* [worship] on that Night as compared with the worship of a thousand months. In other words, when Allah Most High shows its superiority it is tantamount to ordering the believers to perform the worship on that night. This is so because when the Ruler praises a thing, it is tantamount to issuing a command or to instill a strong desire to perform the praised thing or deed. When the Ruler expresses the wickedness of something, it means that he wants the believers to avoid or abhor it. A number of such instances and precedents are found in the Quran.

In addition to this Quranic Verse, the Traditions emphasise the worship on this night and its virtues. These explain the said Quranic Verse. The practice of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{S^{LM}} too proves the importance of this Night. With the arrival of the last ten days of the month of Ramazan, Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{S^{LM}} used to make special arrangements for worship, he not only used to worship throughout the night but also wake up members of his family to join him in worship. Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani^{RA} writes in detail quoting Hazrat Abu Zar Ghifari^{RZ} in his book, *Ghuniyat at-Talibin*, how Prophet^{S^{LM}} worshipped on the Night of Power.

Hazrat Abu Zar Ghafari^{RZ} says, "On the 23rd night of Ramazan, Hazrat Prophet^{S^{LM}} came and made us say our *namaz* for one-third of the night. He did not come on the 24th night. He came on the 25th night and made us say our *namaz* till the midnight. We told him, 'It would have been better if you had made say our *namaz* for the whole night.' Prophet^{S^{LM}} said, 'The person who stands in *namaz* with the imam and completes it with the imam, gets the divine rewards for having worshipped the whole night.' He did not come on the 26th night. He arrived on the 27th night, and assembled all of us and the members of his family and continued to make us say our *namaz* till such a time that we feared that we might miss our *sahari*.³⁸

Hazrat Imam Syed Muhammad Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS} revived this same *sunnat* [practice] of Prophet^{S^{LM}}, assembled his family members, other relatives, and other believers and the faithful [*musaddiqin*], performed *namaz* and emphatically commanded his followers to always act in accordance with this *sunnat* [practice] of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{S^{LM}}.

One should not think that the addition of a sixth *namaz* would cause the abrogation of the *Shariat* because the order that is based on the principles of *Shariat* and is extracted from the same principles does not cause the repeal of *Shariat*. Otherwise, all the controversial issues of the *mujtahidin* too would cause the repeal of the *Shariat*, although nobody would concede any such formulation. Furthermore, making the *dogana* of the Night of Power does neither annul any matter of *Shariat* nor alters any command of the *Shariat* of Prophet Muhammad^{S^{LM}}.

In addition to all this, the *ulama* of *Usul* have explained that even if a sixth *namaz* were to be added as a *farz*, it would not cause the repeal of the *Shariat*.

Hazrat Allamah Tuftazani^{RA} has written in his well-known book, *Talveeh*, "There is difference of opinion among the *ulama-e-Usul* whether an addition in the *nas* [a definite and clear Verse of Quran] causes repeal [of *Shariat*] or not. If the added worship is permanent, like the sixth *namaz*, it would not be

³⁸ *Sahari* means food taken by Muslims some time before dawn during the fasting month of Ramazan.

abrogation, according to the consensus of the *ulama*. Even if it is accepted that the *dogana* of the Night of Power is a sixth *namaz*, it will not cause the abrogation of *Shariat*. There can be no other objection to it.

Among the examples given earlier, it was said in respect of a certain issue a certain *mujtahid* might have treated it as *mustahab* [permissible] or *na-jaiz* [impermissible], while another *mujtahid* might have treated it as *wajib* or *farz* [obligation]. For instance, Hazrat Imam Azam^{RA} holds that there are only four *faraiz* in *wazu*. Imam Malik^{RA} added one more *farz* in *wazu*, that is, the organs should be washed one after the other in quick succession. Thus, according to Imam Malik^{RA}, there are five *faraiz* in *wazu*. Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal^{RA} said that reciting *Bismillah* too is a *farz*. Imam Shafe'i^{RA} said that reciting the intention [by words of mouth] and sequence also are *faraiz*. Thus, according to Imam Azam^{RA}, there are four *faraiz* in *wazu*; according to Imam Malik^{RA} they are five; according to Imam Hanbal^{RA} also they are five; and according to Imam Shafe'i^{RA} there are six *faraiz* in *wazu*. This is not abrogation. It is not an alteration in *Shariat*. It is not a *bid'at* [innovation] either. All this is because the sources of the imams are not the same. The argument of each on his formulation too is also correct.

Another instance that is clearer is a regular *namaz*, which is fully similar to the *dogana* of the Night of Power. That is the *namaz* of *witr*. The imams of *ijtihad* have given different rulings about it. According to Imam Malik^{RA}, Imam Shafe'i^{RA} and Imam Hanbal^{RA}, the *namaz* of *witr* is *Sunnat*. Imam Azam^{RA} holds it to be *wajib*. But his disciples, Imam Abu Yusuf^{RA} and Imam Muhammad^{RA} call it a *sunnat*. However, Imam Zafar^{RA} holds it to be a *farz*. A narrative from Imam Azam^{RA} is the same, which Imam Zafar^{RA} has adopted. It is obvious that there is no mention of *witr* in Quran. Quran does not talk about its virtue. There is no command to perform it even by implication in Quran. The Traditions of Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} too are silent about them. Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has not fixed the number *rak'ats* of this *namaz*. He did not always say three *rak'at* of it. According to one *hadith*, Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has once said only one *rak'at* of this *namaz*. This is probably why Hazrat Imam Shafe'i^{RA} has said that in *witr* one to eleven *rak'at* can be said. However, Hazrat Imam Azam^{RA} has fixed only three *rak'at* *namaz* of *witr*. But he said it was *wajib* in contradiction to the research of the three Imams. But Imam Zafar^{RA} calls it a *farz*. However, since these differences of opinion are based on the variety of sources, it cannot be alleged that Hazrat Imam Azam^{RA} has added a sixth *wajib* *namaz* or Imam Zafar^{RA} has added a sixth *farz* *namaz* abrogating the *Shariat* or that they had added these prayers to the commands in the text of Quran. This is so because the imams of *ijtihad* have extracted their formulations from the Quran and the Traditions.

Contrary to this, the Night of Power has been mentioned in the Quran. Its virtues have been described in Quran. Worshipping on the Night of Power has been ordered by implication in Quran. The importance and need of the prayers on this night are proved by the word and deed of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. Here too it can be said that the command of its being *farz* has been extracted from the Quran and Traditions. More so because the person who has ordered the observance of the Night of Power is the Vice-Regent of Allah, is free from erring and is the Ruler of *Shariat*.

As the wisdom and benefits of other *faraiz*, like the ritual prayers [*namaz*], fasting [*roza* or *saum*], poor-due [*zakat*] etc. are elaborately discussed; the wisdom and benefits of the prayers during the Night of Power too can be discussed. If one ponders over it, one finds that making the worship during this Night obligatory means that every person should perform at least the *dogana* during this night, in addition to the routine ritual *farz* and *sunnat* prayers in emulation of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}. And by doing so, he earns the divine rewards of worshipping the whole Night as Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has said, according to *Mishkat* wherein a *rivayat* is narrated on the authority of Abu Dawood, Tirmizi, Nisai and Ibn Maja [*Rahmatullahi Alaihim*]. The *rivayat* says that Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} made [his companions^{RZ}] say their prayers till the midnight on the 25th night of Ramazan. Hazrat Abu Zar Ghifari^{RZ} told the Prophet Muhammad^{SLM}, "How good would it have been if you had made us pray the whole

night?" Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} said in reply, "When one says his *namaz* with the imam till he [the latter] goes away, one gets the divine rewards of the worship of the whole night."³⁹

The outward manifestation of the *dogana* of the Night of Power is that as in many other issues a *mujtahid* or imam decrees a certain deed as *mustahab* [permissible] while another *mujtahid* or imam decrees the same deed as a *wajib* or *farz*, the *mujtahidin* have decreed the worship of the Night of Power as *mustahab*. But Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} has decreed it as a *farz*. This he has done in view of the virtues Allah has attributed to the Night of Power in the Quranic Verses, and the importance Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} has attached to it according to his Traditions and by the special arrangements he made for the worship on that Night. If there is any difference, it is that the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* holds that the imams of *ijtihad* are not free of error and that Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is free from error. When the commands of the *mujtahidin* and those of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} contradict each other, the rule the *Ahl-e-Sunnat* have formulated is that the command of Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is *hujjat* [final argument or proof] and whoever contradicts Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} is in the wrong. —[*Fawatih Ar-Rahmut*, by Maulana Bahr-ul-Ulum.]

When you look at the benefits and consequences of the *farziyat* [obligation] of the *Dogana*, it becomes clear that our other brethren-in-Islam who are uncertain in fixing the Night of Power and to whom the worship on this Night has no importance are deprived of the bounties of this Night. But the Mahdavi is not deprived of it. And this is the result of the Mahdavi believing the *Dogana* of this Night to be a *farz* on him. "Such is the grace of Allah which He giveth unto whom He will."⁴⁰

Our readers have seen that for of all these reasons, the *farziyat* of the *Dogana* of the Night of power is in perfect consonance with the Quran, the Traditions of Hazrat Prophet Muhammad^{SLM} and the accepted principles of the *Ahl-e-Sunnat*. And no Muslim can hold as blameworthy or target of criticism any worship, particularly *namaz*, which is the comprehensive form of all worship under the injunctions of Islam, on the Night, which Allah says is better than a thousand months. None can call it unnecessary of *bid'at* [innovation].

After this short discussion, there can be no doubt about the *farziyat* of the *dogana* of the Night of Power. And there is no scope for any confusion in the heart of any Mahdavi. After this, the one significant point to be remembered is that Imam Mahdi^{AS} did not ordinarily lead the daily ritual prayers [*namaz*]. Miyan Larh^{RZ} or some other companion^{RZ} of the Imam^{AS} used to lead the ritual prayers, said five times a day. But when Allah commanded Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} to observe the Night of Power, He also commanded the Imam^{AS} to lead the congregation of the two-*rak'at namaz* [or the *Dogana*]. Hence, the Imam^{AS} led the congregation of the *Dogana* on the first Night of Power and every subsequent Night of Power every year for the rest of his life. After terminating the *Dogana* with a *Salaam*, he recited the Quranic Verses, which are the substance of the supplications the Prophets and Apostles of Allah and other saints and that have been copied in Quran.

The importance of this *namaz* is obvious as Hazrat Imam Mahdi^{AS} had led its congregation. It is perhaps for this reason, the pious elderly *murshids* of the yore have counted the leading of the congregation of the *Dogana* of the Night of Power among the *Af'aaal-e-Irshadi* [the duties of the *Murshids*]. This practice is in vogue during the last five centuries among the Mahdavis. Even today, every Mahdavi considers it necessary to perform the *Dogana* in the congregation of a *murshid*, *pir-e-tariqat* or a pious elderly person whose chain of fealty and Vice-Regency [*Khilafat*] reaches Imam Mahdi al-Mau'ood^{AS} and who is

³⁹ This *rivayat* is quoted in Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani^{RAr}'s book, *Ghaniyat-at-Talibin*. We have dealt with it earlier also.

⁴⁰ Quran, S. 5: 54 MMP.

considered to be entitled to call himself as the successor [*ja-nashin*] of Imam Mahdi^{AS}. This *namaz* must never be missed because there is no *qaza* [saying a missed prayer after its due time]. And this wealth or bounty is destined only once a year!

By the grace of Allah Most High,

This English Translation of the book,

Dogana Laylatul-Qadr

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